

Creative projects

with

Gosplayflex

by Folkenstal

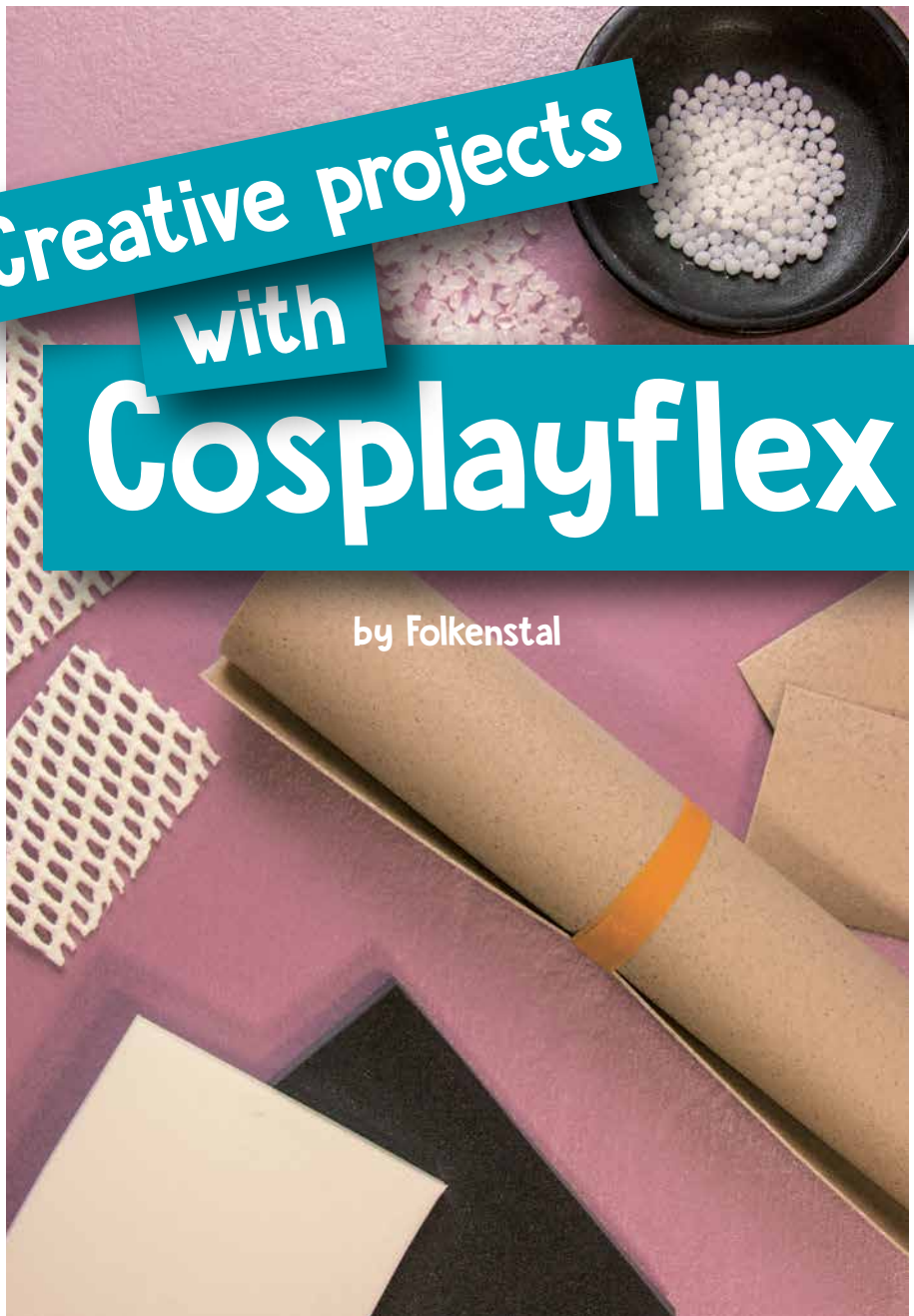


folkenstal

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LAYOUT AND TEXT

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Ana (Folkenstal)

werk9.ch (picture on page 7)

ramuicosplay.com (picture on page 39)

English Edition

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Introduction

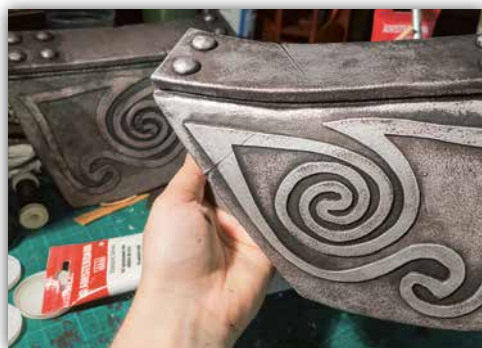
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DEAR READERS,



About me

Hello, I am Ana! You may know me by the name Folkenstal. I've been building armor and props since 2012 and I do it with passion. In doing so, I am constantly coming to know new techniques and materials that accompany me in my artistic development. My best-known work comes from the video games *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* or *Fallout*. Again and again I return to these games because they offer so many interesting costumes and props and it never gets boring.

I am pleased that you have ventured in the world of prop and armor making and have consulted my book. Thank you very much for buying my book!

If you have never worked with *Cosplayflex*, then you have come to the right place with my book. I am looking forward to guiding you through the most important cornerstones of using *Cosplayflex*. Be it Wonder Woman armor or a sword, you will be able to build this!

Have fun moulding and casting!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Folkenstal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

WHAT ARE THERMOPLASTICS?

EVERYTHING IS ABOUT HEAT!

Thermoplastics are materials that are activated, processed and deformed with heat. In the field of cosplay and propmaking *Cosplayflex* is often used and the application possibilities are great. Thermoplastics are soft, bendable and

slightly sticky when heated and can be manipulated into the desired shape. Then you just let them cool again, so they become stable and firm once more. The materials can be reheated and deformed at any time and stuck to each other. So it does not need any additional glue to stick together different pieces.



Thermoplastics are used for armor, props such as weapons or robots, fine modelling and more.

As thermoplastics can be easily heated and deformed with a heat gun, they can be processed in the living room. Since no toxic fumes are released, it is also possible for children to work with them. Of course, you should never let the younger generation handle the heat gun alone, as this is the most dangerous tool besides the cutting tool and can cause burns.



SOURCES OF SUPPLY WORLDWIDE



RELEASE THE KRAKEN!

In the beginning, *Cosplayflex* delivered everything directly from their warehouse in Germany. These days there are some international dealers to reduce shipping costs for artists from all over the world.

You can see on the website *Cosplayflex.com*, where your nearest

dealer is as this list is always up to date.

The goal of *Cosplayflex* is to have several stations around the world, so that no Cosplayer or Prop-maker has to pay too high shipping costs. And if you have contact persons in your own country, it's easier for you too.



PROPS

The Euclid's C-Finder from the game *Fallout: New Vegas* consists of *Cosplayflex Classic* and a Foam base.

WORK PLACE & TOOLS

NOTHING WORKS WITHOUT HEAT

Most aspiring hobbyists who want to immerse themselves in the world of *Cosplayflex*, ask me which tools to use and what the basic equipment consists of.

The work materials one can not do without for the construction of armor and costume pieces are:

- scissors
- X-Acto knife/cutter
- heat gun
- baking paper
- ballpoint pen or Sharpie
- work gloves
- ceramic bowl
- adhesive tape
- paper for cutting patterns

With these tools you are well equipped for the beginning and you can start right away!

The heat gun is of the utmost importance. This can generate a

heat of 50 to 600 °C and is ideal for working with *Cosplayflex*. Please make sure that you buy a heat gun with a display, because then it is easier to regulate the heat. Personally, I can not do much with heat levels 1–3, because depending on the size and amount of cosplay material, it's better to see how hot you work.

Baking paper serves as a protection for your work surface, because almost all *Cosplayflex*



COSPLAYFLEX PRODUCT RANGE

SO MANY POSSIBILITIES!

All *Cosplayflex* products have the same characteristics: They are warmed up with heat and then get processed. Thanks to the built-in adhesive you need no additional glue when working with the prod-

ucts. All can be combined and glued together. They can be reheated and reprocessed at any time.

The product range has grown rapidly since I started with *Cosplayflex Classic* in 2015. *Cosplayflex Classic* is a beginner-friendly product, ideal for armor, helmets, props, weapons and theatre scenery.



Cosplayflex Classic

Classic
Cosplay flex with the light-brown slightly rough surface.

shapeable:
from 60 °C in the material core



Cosplayflex Clear

Transparent, flexible material, approx. 3mm thickness. Flexible when cooled down. Needs a higher working temperature.

shapeable:
from 90 °C in the material core



Cosplayflex Meshcast

White material with a mesh-like textile insert. Stable and tear-resistant after cooling.

shapeable:
from 60 °C in the material core

Cosplayflex Clear has the special feature that it is transparent and flexible and maintains these characteristics after heating. Here, however, you must pay attention to working with gloves, as fingerprints are quickly visible. These can be made to disappear with a little heat from the heat gun.

The *Pebbles* and *Crystal* granules are ideal for smaller projects and are heated in a bowl, so that they are not blown away by the wind of the heat gun.

In both products you can mix in color pigments to achieve new colors. More details in a later chapter (p. 46).

Meshcast is ideal for stressed parts such as joints between armor plates, or bonds that need a very strong adherence. Be careful, when heating: *Meshcast* is extremely sticky!

Foam is the only material that does not stick by itself but is used as the basis for cutting patterns and serves as a support for *Cosplayflex Classic*. More details in a later chapter (p. 34).



Cosplayflex Pebbles

White granules, which turn hard and stable again, when cooling down.

shapeable:
from 50 °C in the material core

Cosplayflex Crystal

Transparent granules like *Cosplayflex Clear* stay flexible after cooling.

Need a higher working temperature.

shapeable:
from 90 °C in the material core

Cosplayflex Foam

Foam that does not need heat, but is used as a pattern and basis for cutting patterns. Available in different degrees of hardness and color.

Can be heated and shaped.

shapeable:
from 60 °C in the material core

THE VERSATILE CLASSIC

KNOW-HOW!

Of course, to successfully master your first steps in the field of thermoplastics, you need to know what the material offers you. Here we start with *Cosplayflex Classic*, because this product is very versatile.

If you are still unsure at the beginning, you can test heat the material and put it over a few shapes of your choice to see how the material behaves. Take, for example, a mask as a template, or a

sculpture. Heat a piece of *Cosplayflex Classic* and place it carefully over the mould. Now you can carefully press *Classic* with your hands on the mould and watch how easy it can be formed to the sculpture. It is shapeable and soft, but can tear if the material is overstretched. Experiment a bit and test the limits of the material!

Another way to handle the product is to use it as a modelling clay. Heat a few strips and sculpt a small figure to develop a feel for





Cosplayflex is very popular if you want to model something freely. Let your imagination run wild!

working with *Classic*. You can heat the material over and over again to keep it soft. As you can see in the example pictures, the possibilities are manifold. From whole sculptures to technical details, all variants are possible.

But before you start your first big project, practice first. This makes it much easier for you to handle all materials!





Cutting multiple layers of *Cosplayflex Classic* is no problem with a sharp and good pair of scissors. If the material is slightly heated beforehand, it's easier to cut.

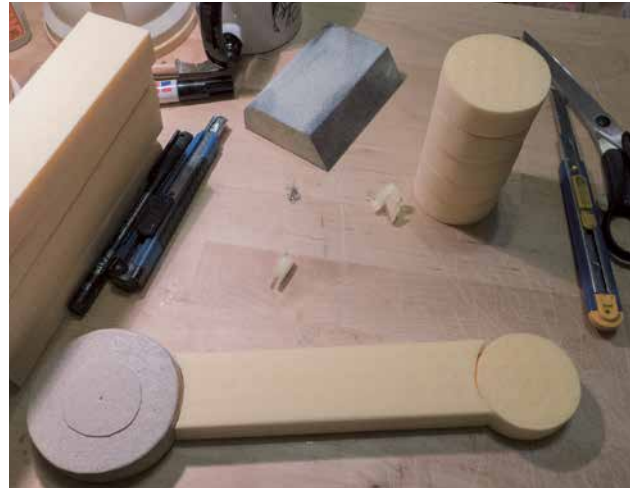
THE SANDWICH-TECHNIQUE

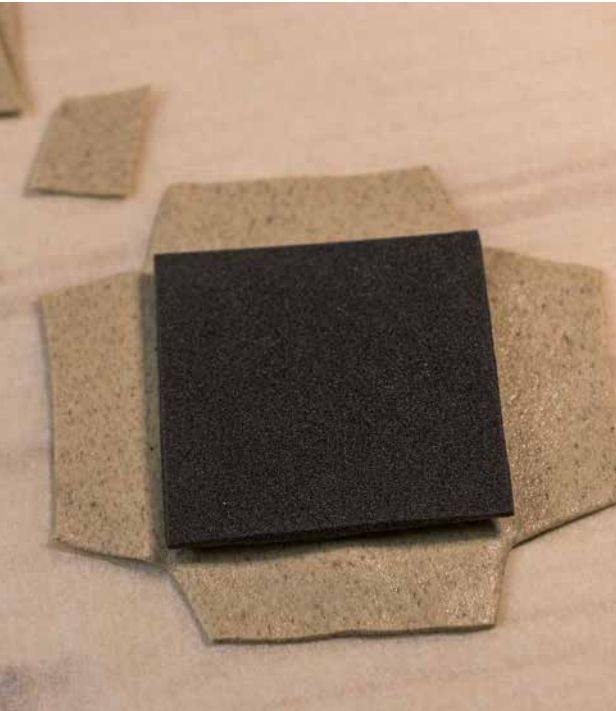
The sandwich technique is often used where an armor piece or a prop is seen from both sides when worn. For example, with swords or other props, which do not lie against the body and thus the ugly side can

not be hidden. In this technique, cut out two equal parts and glue them on the opposite side to your base. Make sure that the spot where the edges of *Cosplayflex* meet is neatly processed. First you cut away the protruding edges, and then you heat the spot again to then clean them. Simply press on *Cosplayflex* with your fingers until it has a clean

seam, or use the table or other surfaces to get a smooth surface. This is also possible with a rolling pin.

The sandwich technique uses quite a lot of material, because the cut parts always have to be created twice.





MATERIAL SAVING!

The sandwich technique does not have to be used everywhere. For armor pieces that lie against your body and where only one side is visible, you can use the edge technique. One side is completely covered with *Cosplayflex* and on the other side you leave a border to turn it over.

This technique keeps the shape stable and at the same time it saves material. If you want to attach fasteners such as belts or eyelets, the edge on the back should be sturdy and wide enough for it (so glue more than 10 mm and maybe even twice as much material). The greater the width the more

Foam is available in different thicknesses. Try out what works best for you.

stable and the better to attach D-rings or belts.

Cosplayflex Classic can be used for masks, armor parts, props, moving parts such as robot arms, weapon imitations and more.

Classic can be used with any other materials such as rigid foam panels, soft foam, PVC sheets, Styrofoam, or wood. It sticks to most surfaces, sometimes even irreversibly.

With lightweight base parts such as hard and soft foam even large projects are possible if they are dressed with a layer of *Cosplayflex Classic*.





For example, with this technique, I built Codsworth, which is shown on the right hand side of the page. The arms are all movable and can be moved to different positions by means of joints.

The more layers of *Cosplayflex* are placed on top of each other, the more material is added and it gets heavier. Keep this in mind, if you have more complicated projects. Note that if you use too much material, you cannot hold up your giant sword during a contest on stage.

Cut out the pattern with a pair of good scissors and stick it on with a heat gun.

INFO BOX!

Cosplayflex products can be cut with a pair of scissors or with an X-Acto knife, depending on the type. Cosplayflex Classic can be cut with both, making it easier to cut with the scissors when the material

is heated up slightly. Clear can not be cut with scissors because it is too thick. Just test both types of cutting tools so you can decide which one works best for you.



Codsworth

One of the loyal companions of the video game *Fallout 4* consists of a combination of Cosplayflex Classic, PVC panels and hard foam panels.



FLEXIBLE AND TRANSPARENT

FLEXIBILITY IS YOUR FRIEND

Cosplayflex Clear is clear and thicker than *Classic* and remains flexible after cooling. With this feature you can model harmless details like thorns or horns and present them at events without the

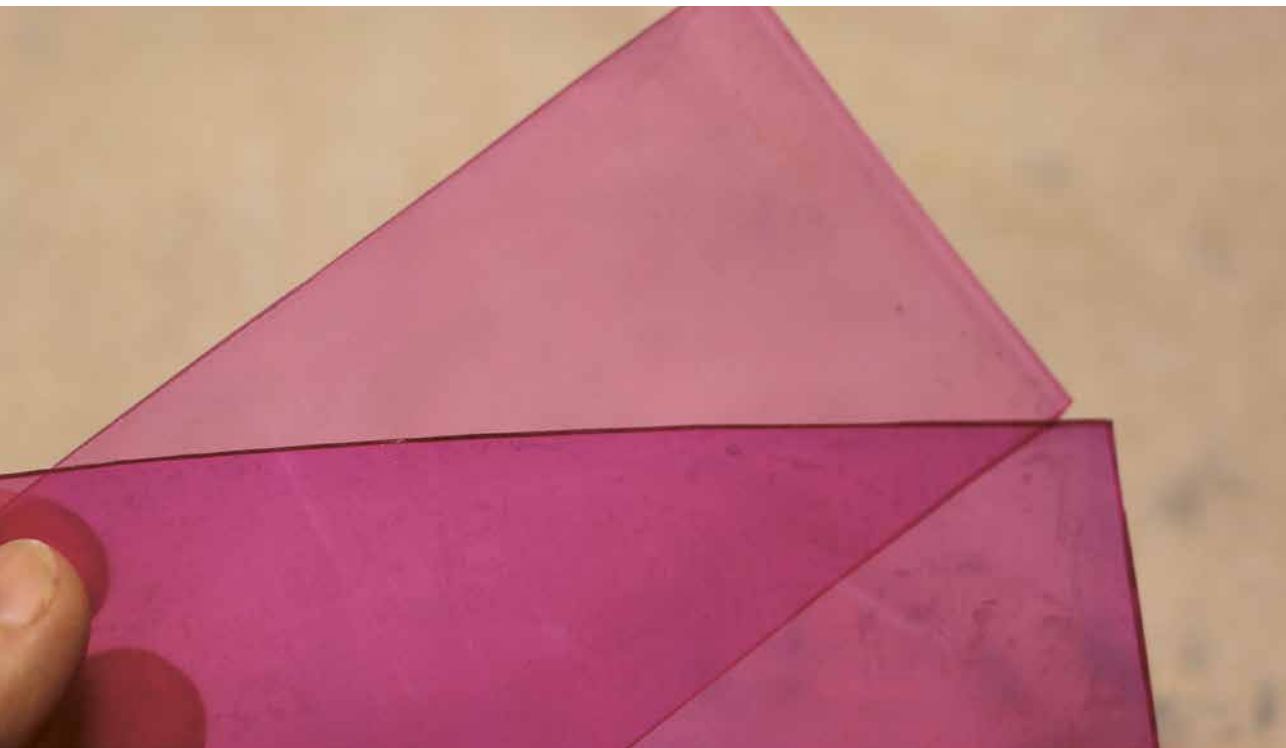
risk of hurting yourself or other people. Depending on the event, dangerous props are not even allowed in, so you're on the safe side with *Clear*. Once sculpted, it is flexible but retains its shape and only deforms again when heated.

However, *Clear* needs a higher temperature for moulding! With its 90 °C, it becomes a case for work

gloves. In any case it makes sense to use them, because fingerprints will be visible on the clear surface.

If you want to color *Clear* then gloves are essential. More details for coloring on page 46.

When heating, you have to find the point where you can still work well with the material, because when it gets too hot, it starts to get really soft. This makes modelling difficult, and it has to cool down first.



The material is generally very flexible and working with it may not be easy for you as a beginner. So why not start with *Cosplayflex Classic* and slowly work your way up to the advanced materials.

Clear can be cut, glued together and deformed. The adhesive property is huge, so be aware that if something has been glued, it stays glued. Fingerprints and oils reduce the adhesive property very quickly, so work clean with *Clear*.

You can work without gloves for a while, but in this case you have to degrease your hands first.

INFO BOX!

If, despite clean work, Clear has become cloudy, you can easily heat the surface with the heat gun until it turns glassy. Then let it cool and do not touch it anymore. This is a little trick that works well if Clear is just

dirty on the surface. If there is dirt inside, it is not possible to correct this.

So take care to work cleanly. It just takes some practice, then you can do it.



Spikes

Cosplayflex Clear
was ideal for the sharp
spikes on the sword.
Nobody can get hurt
by these!



SMALL SPHERES VERY BIG

VERSATILE MATERIAL

Cosplayflex Pebbles and *Crystal* are part of the granules family. Both are heated with a heat gun in a container and used for modelling.

You carefully heat the granules without blowing them away. *Pebbles* change their appearance from white to glassy when heated.

That's how you know when to take them out of the container for modelling. Since *Crystal* is already transparent and does not change its appearance, you need to control when it is soft and ready to be taken out.

The granules can now be modelled until they cool down slowly. If you are still not satisfied with what you have modelled, you

1



2



Once normal and once heated:

1. *Cosplayflex Pebbles*
2. *Cosplayflex Crystal*

can easily go over the surface with the heat gun and heat and adjust a few of the areas. The great thing about thermoplastics is that they can be heated and processed over and over again.



GLOVES WHEN COLORING

Pebbles and *Crystal*, as well as *Cosplayflex Clear*, can be colored to generate new effects.

It is usually not necessary to use gloves, when working with *Pebbles*, as they melt at a temperature of 60 °C and can be handled with unprotected hands.

With *Crystal* it is recommended to work with gloves, as you can leave fingerprints during work same as with *Cosplayflex Clear*. When coloring both products, you must wear gloves to protect your skin.

More details for coloring on page 46.



Cooled down *Cosplayflex Pebbles* on top and *Cosplayflex Crystal* below



Dioramas

With the granules, very small things can be made, as here in my diorama, which adorns various objects.



REPAIRS MADE EASY

IDEAL ALSO FOR BASIC SHAPES

Meshcast has various applications such as mask and doll making, repairs of costume pieces and basic mould making for wigs. The material has a textile carrier that is used, where props and costume pieces are heavily worn. With this the basic shape of a helmet, or a frame for a wig with horns that need firm hold can be made.

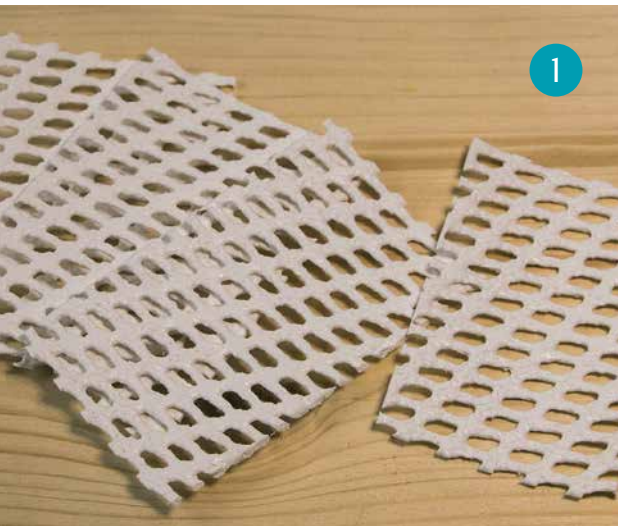
To make working easier, *Meshcast* is cut into smaller pieces. Now you simply heat it with the heat gun or with a hot water bath at 60 °C.

The material is extremely sticky, so you have to know beforehand where to place the pieces. *Meshcast* is stable and tear-resistant after cooling.

When repairs are made to costume pieces that are not made of *Cosplayflex*, hot glue sometimes is not enough and something

stronger must be used. *Meshcast* can then be glued to the places to be repaired. Mostly this is done on the inside of armor parts, where the

corrected areas are rarely visible. In doing so you simply heat up *Meshcast* and stick it on the spot.





NOT ONLY FOR CUTTING PATTERNS

INGENIOUS AS BUILDING MATERIAL

Cosplayflex Foam is a material in the *Cosplayflex* range that dances a bit out of line.

Foam is, as the name implies, foam and is not used as a thermo-plastic. There are different thicknesses like 3 mm, 5 mm and 10 mm and a distinction is made between

the different levels of hardness with soft, medium and hard.

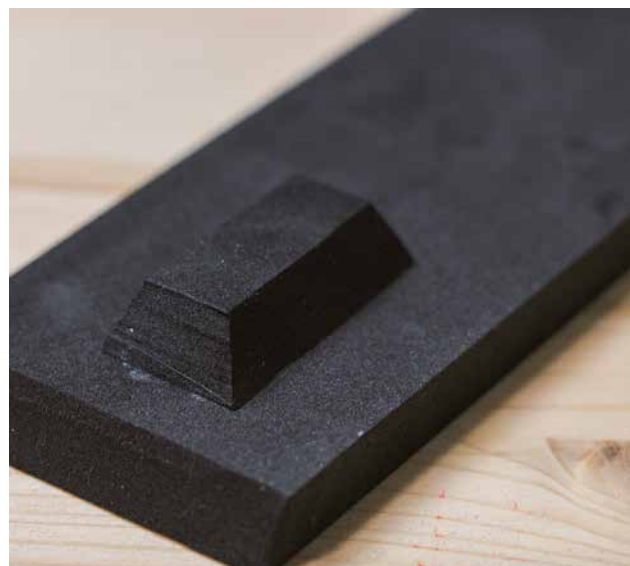
Foam is often used in the costume area for creating patterns. The parts are then covered with a layer of *Cosplayflex* to make the foam more stable (described in the chapter of *Cosplayflex Classic*). However, what makes the foam special is that you can also use it alone for processing.

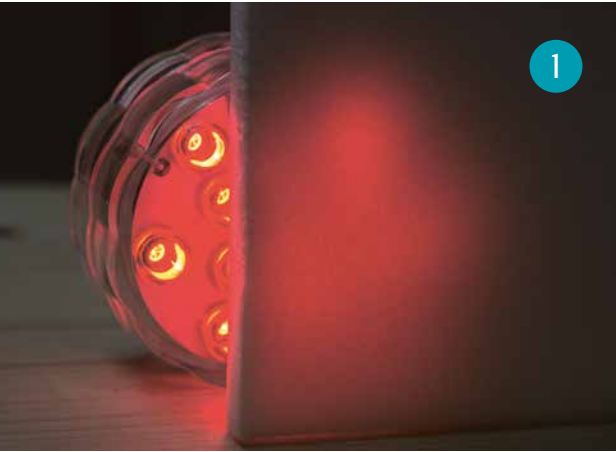
Kövuifix can also be found in hardware stores.



For projects that require a lightweight design, *Foam* can be used. Since it is not self-adhesive, it must be glued on with a contact adhesive. Personally, I use *Kövuifix*, as it has proven itself in connection with *Foam*. Contact adhesive from the tube is easier to use because you have better control over the flow.

For optimal adhesion, the surfaces to be bonded must be coated on both sides with adhesive and once they are dry, you must press the parts firmly together.





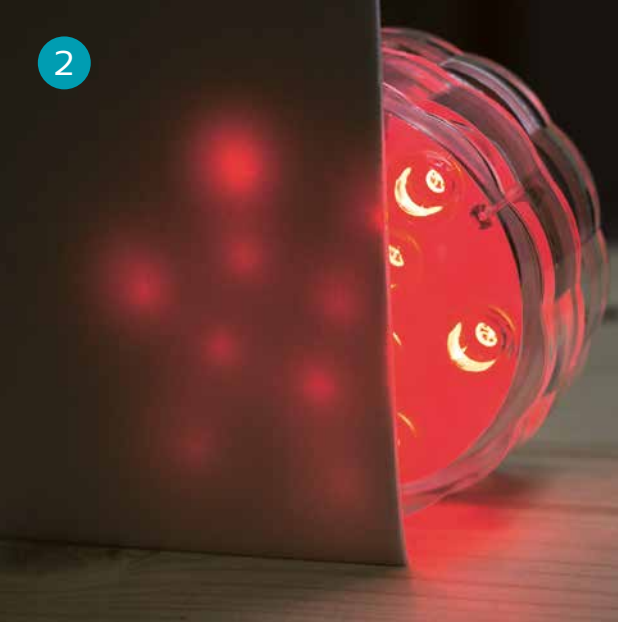
A LIGHT SPECTACLE!

A variant of *Cosplayflex Foam*, which has a noteworthy feature, is *Lux*.

It's the only foam that lets light shine through. The example on the left shows how evenly the light is scattered, even if the light source is quite close. This makes it ideal for projects that need to be illuminated.

With the scalpel you can easily cut patterns in *Lux*. This can, for example, create new lighting effects and patterns. Since *Lux* with its 10 mm is quite thick, it is possible to make deep cuts.

The usual *Cosplayflex Foam (Soft)* is not as translucent. Although the light shines through where the material is thinner, it does not



1. *Cosplayflex Foam Lux 10mm*
2. *Cosplayflex Foam Soft 3mm*
3. *Cosplayflex Foam Soft 5mm*

scatter. With the 5 mm *Foam* it filters through very weakly. But the regular *Foam* is – in contrast to *Lux* – fine-pored, which makes sealing easier.

That makes *Lux* ideal for your light projects. Even simple lamps can be built in no time, as shown here in the right-hand picture.



USE ROTARY TOOLS

Cosplayflex Foam can be cut with an X-Acto knife or with a scalpel.

Since the cutting of *Foam* does not always turn out uniform, depending on the capabilities of the user, the faulty areas can be corrected at any time using a rotary tool and an abrasive attachment.

Care must be taken to ensure that the rotary device does not press too heavily on *Foam* during processing, otherwise it may be the case that too much material is removed.

It is always advisable to practice first on some leftovers.





Foam

The armor parts and the bow are made of foam.



PRIMING AND COLORING

DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES

You would like to bring some color to your projects? No problem!

To get the right colors for the different materials, here's a little guide. It is important to know that

for movable parts need to be used flexible colors, that do not chip or break. For parts that are not stressed, colors from the spray can may be enough.

Basically every surface has to be primed first. Depending on the surface, paints do not adhere on



- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Flexbond from Rosco | 4. Primers from a hardware store |
| 2. Acrylic paints from AMSTERDAM | 5. mibenco – Primer |
| 3. Plasti Dip – Primer | 6. Spray paint from a hardware store |



their own and can chip. Normally it is enough to buy a primer from a hardware store, which can be found in the car paint department.

Metal effects especially are often applied with colors from the can, because you can work much faster and the colors cover better.

Please keep in mind that this only applies to armor parts and projects where the parts do not bend. An example of this is the prop shown on the left side. The base was carved with XPS foam boards from a hardware store and covered with *Cosplayflex Classic*. Then it was coated with a layer of primer and a few layers of spray paint. These parts do not usually bend and are safe from excessive use.

I have painted accents like arrows and smaller areas with ordinary acrylic paint. Here take care to use opaque colors, otherwise you have to apply too many layers.

At the end, the applied color can be sealed with a glossy or matt clear lacquer.

FLEXIBLE COLORS

For projects that are slightly more stressed, that is bent often, or consist only of *Cosplayflex Foam*, ordinary spray paint and clear coat are not enough. When the paint dries it turns hard and this may cause cracks or chips on frequently moving surfaces.

For these materials there is a solution called *Flexbond* from the brand *Rosco*.

Flexbond is a wood glue-like liquid that remains flexible after drying. You can add acrylic paint to it, to paint your projects from scratch with the colors of your choice.

Flexbond itself serves as a primer, as a color and protective varnish in a product. *Flexbond* is used in the theatre industry for scenery and props, so you'll definitely love it!



Flexbond and acrylic paint mixed.



NEED SOME LIQUID RUBBER?

Liquid rubber is ideal for priming your project. It remains bendable after drying like *Flexbond* and exists in different colors.

On page 41, you may have noticed that spray cans labelled *Plasti Dip* and *mibenco* are pictured. These two brands have proven themselves for my projects with *Cosplayflex Classic* and *Foam*.



Flexbond mixed with copper acrylic paint, applied on *Foam* for maximum flexibility.



Photographs: Folkenstal LLC

Miniatures

Projects in the miniature area can be created excellently and then be painted with acrylic paint and Flexbond.



COLOR THE MATERIAL

TEXTILE COLORS

Cosplayflex *Clear*, *Pebbles* and *Crystal* can be colored if desired. There are projects that require transparent, colored parts and with the right technology, this is possible. For this I use *iDye Poly*, a textile dye for polyester.

First and foremost, wear disposable gloves.

According to the packaging instructions, water is heated and poured into a container. Then the color pack and the "Color Intensifier" are added and mixed. *Cosplayflex Clear* can simply be placed in the container until the water cools down. I put in the pink-colored *Clear*

for about 5 minutes, rinsed it with warm water and then dried it off.

The longer you leave the material in the water, the more intense the color becomes. Watch out that *Clear* does not suddenly turn cloudy! Watch your sheet of *Clear* and take it out in time if you are happy with the color.





The same goes for *Pebbles* and *Crystal*. Both can be dyed without problems with *iDye Poly*. However, the dyeing water becomes hot and as we now know, the two thermoplastics are active (formable) under 100 °C.

Boiling water, on the other hand, would melt the granules immediately. To maintain the shape, I recommend allowing the water to cool slightly and then adding *Pebbles* and *Crystal*.

Both are dyed without problems despite the low water temperature.

INFO BOX!

Since there is no indication on the packaging of iDye Poly for how to remove the dyeing water, I mention it here briefly. The official instruction PDF says: "Dye bath is safe to pour down drain/septic

systems." So this can be flushed down the drain without a guilty conscience. This is true only for iDye Poly and does not apply to other dyes. For safety reasons, always read the safety data sheets online.

MANUAL COLORING

Another way to dye *Pebbles* and *Crystal* is to knead in colorings.

For this I like to use the *SO-Strong-colors* from the company *Smooth-On*. Normally, these are used as additives for synthetic casting resin, but also work great in *Pebbles* and *Crystal*.

For incorporating these colors, I recommend gloves because these pigments can instantly stain your skin.

Also, glass paints are often used, which are possibly easier to get in commerce.



On the right I have incorporated *Ignite Red*. The color is truly bright!



STORAGE AND HANDLING

CORRECT HANDLING

Cosplayflex Classic and all other thermoplastics, are heat-sensitive. Although temperatures above 60 °C rarely occur in everyday life, the temperature inside a vehicle is rarely considered.

There have been wild stories about having whole set of armor

stored in the car, and after a few hours, when the owner came back, the parts had collapsed. This often happens at warmer temperatures and not just in summer.

In doing so, *Cosplayflex* becomes warm and bendable and collapses due to its own weight and can now also stick to other pieces of armor. A friend of mine stored a roll of *Cosplayflex Classic* in her

armor shell in the car. Due to the heat everything stuck together and afterwards the material was only usable as modelling clay.

Stick to this rule: You do not leave your pet in the car during high temperatures, so please avoid doing so with *Cosplayflex*-products.

Luckily you do not have to worry about *Foam*. This resists these temperatures and can not stick to other materials.

AVOID HUMIDITY

Since *Cosplayflex Classic* contains a certain amount of wood, it is susceptible to moisture. So do not store it in a damp place (basement, bathroom, balcony). You should also avoid leaving costumes or props in the rain.



GLOSSARY FOR MATERIALS

IDYE POLY

A dye for textiles with polyester fibres. Can be used in this case to color *Cosplayflex Clear* .

PLASTI DIP

Liquid rubber in different colors. Sprays an elastic surface that can be used as a primer.

PRIMER

Primer, primer spray, pre-treatment of the surface before painting. *Flex-bond*, *Plasti Dip*, *mibenco* primers belong in this category.

SMOOTH-ON INC.

A company that produces and sells silicone and synthetic resin in the film and theatre industry. Additives like *Ignite* and *So-Strong* can be mixed under *Pebbles* and *Crystal*.

XPS FOAM

Construction foam panels, *Styrodur*, insulation boards from hardware stores. May have colors like purple, orange, yellow, light green. Can be cut and carved.

PVC-PANELS

Are called *Sintra*, *Lion Board* or similar, depending on the brand. Are simple PVC panels in the thickness of 3–5 mm or more and can be bought from hardware stores.



CLOSING WORDS

Now you have learned a lot about what you need to know about using the *Cosplayflex* range. Work with the material, apply different techniques and invent new ones if you want. Do your best on your way to your first successful project, watch videos from other artists, join the *Cosplayflex* community, and share your experiences!

Share your work and enjoy your projects, because then you will grow and improve your skills!

Good luck!

Ana aka folkenstal

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'folkenstal', written in a cursive style.



"Creativity takes courage."

– Henri Matisse

OTHER WORKS AND BOOKS

As an artist and young author, I am always working on new projects and I would like to share them with you. In the creative field it is important to always learn new techniques, because then you can choose your favourites and improve them.

My first book "Cast like magic - a beginners guide to mold making and resin casting" describes the topic of silicone casting and working with synthetic resin with a focus on smooth-on products.

Easy to understand for beginners, I'll show you step by step how to make casts of your projects. From very simple to more complex moulds, you will get to know detailed procedures and techniques. With this book you will then be able to start your own project and make casts.

The book is available commercially as well as online at folkenstal.com.





www.folkenstal.com