

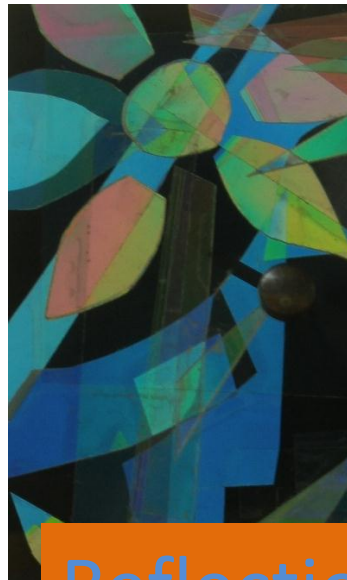
# Polage

○ Rachel Teo | ○ Day 1 | ○ Jan 7, 2013

“I explore the mysteries of pure light. I use no pigments whatsoever, but I create colorful images. Using polarizing filters and clear cellulose, I break white light into its pure component colors.” ~Austine Wood Comarow<sup>1</sup>

## What is happening:

Polarization is a phenomenon associated with electromagnetic radiation. It can be observed when a ray of light hits a surface which is glossy or scattering. The beam of light contains various waves oscillating in either a horizontal or vertical direction. When the beam hits the scattering/reflecting surface some of those waves are suppressed and the reflected light is polarized. When a special polarizing filter is used light can be specifically filtered so that only horizontal or vertical oscillating waves are allowed through. In this project, cellophane tape was used to separate different colors of light by layering different shapes of tape on top of each other. The colors are caused by the interaction of light that is polarized passing through the molecules of the “optically active” (birefringent) material cellophane. When the two polarizing filters which sandwich the tape layers are rotated, different colors appear.



## The Creator of Polage and its Role Today:

Polage is a term coined by artist Austine Wood Comarow. It is a combination of the words polarize and collage. Austine uses no pigment in her work, instead the colors are created by laminating clear cellophane onto polarizing filters to create the bright hues seen her artwork. She is the first artist to use such a technique and her artwork has been showcased in many places around the world such as the Boston Museum of Science and the Singapore Science Center. Her artwork is frequently seen in many hospitals around the country as well, due to their calming effects.

## Reflection:

For me there was an element of frustration in this project as I couldn't seem to get the colors I wanted as quickly and as easily as I am used to working with other mediums. I think this was in part due to the fact that I did not completely grasp the concept of polarization and therefore could not apply it while making my polage. In any case I was intrigued by the way the colors shifted as the filters were turned and though my original idea had been to make an abstract polage, I changed my mind after the first few pieces of tape. In my final design I wanted to give a sense of day and night using the cool and warm colors that appear when the filter is rotated a full 180 degrees.

Sources:

1. <http://austine.com/about/artists-statement-bio/>