

PAPER TOLE BASICS

By Maureen Williams

Paper Tole is created by taking different parts of an image, shaping them and then raising them above a flat print to give a 3 dimensional image. The degree of depth obtained depends on the number of prints used and the complexity of the image chosen. When you start out it is best to use single, open flowers until you get the idea of how to shape the prints and glue them in place. The flowers we will be using in class are quite simple and will allow you to practice how to visualize the individual petals and prepare them for the placement on the egg. Check out the various Sonie Ames prints available as these are ideal for this technique.
<http://www.sonieames.com/>

The following definitions are taken from the IEAG Masters description for the Relief category. To my mind they both have the effect of raising a flat image and giving it some depth to create a more interesting effect. However, paper tole raises portions of the image off the original print and with bas relief the cut-out portions are shaped and curved back onto the original print, thus giving a low relief appearance.

1. PAPER TOLE: Paper Tole is the modern technique of creating a three-dimensional look by cutting apart several identical prints and building them up in layers. The technique is achieved by using one print as a background and raising layers over the matching background. In Paper Tole, the edges are left loose, not glued down to the matching background. This is to create a feeling of width, height, and depth.

2. BAS RELIEF - REPOUSSE: Bas-Relief and Repousse are both forms of decoupage. They are sometimes defined as sculptured or raised drawings. It generally has a flat background, is not in the round, but only elevated in part. The sculptured form is designed only to project a small degree from the background. The technique is achieved by contouring parts of the print from the underside into a convex shape (rounded up) and then stuffing and molding the print which has already been contoured with a non-shrinking material. When gluing the print to the eggshell, all edges are glued down to the shell and buried under a smooth finish of Decoupage Medium.

We will be working with the raised effect but keep in mind the end result is determined by whether the petals are shaped on the top on the image or from underneath the image. Sometimes a combination of the two techniques can be quite attractive but be aware (especially in a show judging situation like the IEAG Masters) that this may conflict with their definitions of paper/relief sculpture.

Pre-preparation for the Class

- As we want to see the effect of the paper tole on an egg rather than a flat surface I suggest you use a duck egg or small goose egg to practice on. The egg does not need to be cut or painted for this exercise. We will use the flowers from the web page listed in the Requirements file.
- If you wish to change the colours of the flowers using water colour pencils or chinks, as I have done on the egg on the Class page, do this before the class.
- Coat the front of the flowers with a coat of Matt Mod Podge or other water based medium. This will give the paper a bit more stability when we start shaping the petals.
- Paint the back of the flowers with a similar colour wash so you won't see white paper when viewed from behind.
- Note the petal placement of the individual flowers – which one is the bottom petal, which ones overlap, which one is on top. These will be cut from identical prints and then re-assembled

Tools

The leather shaping tool is not essential but makes life nice and easy for shaping flowers – both paper tole and punched paper ones. Try craft outlets if you don't have any leather tool outlets in your area. You may also find a similar tool at rubber stamping stores but I prefer the metal to the plastic tools, as some of the plastic tools tend to tear the paper when you shape the petals.

Small curved scissors, fine pointed tweezers, ball stylus or rounded end of a paint brush, foam mouse pad, thick tacky glue and clear silicon are needed. Other items include toothpicks, tissues, pencil



Note

Simple flowers like the one we will be using in class can also be used without cutting out the individual petals. However, I have chosen this one for you to practice with so you can see how to visualise more complex flowers. Obviously the more complex the flowers the more prints you will need.

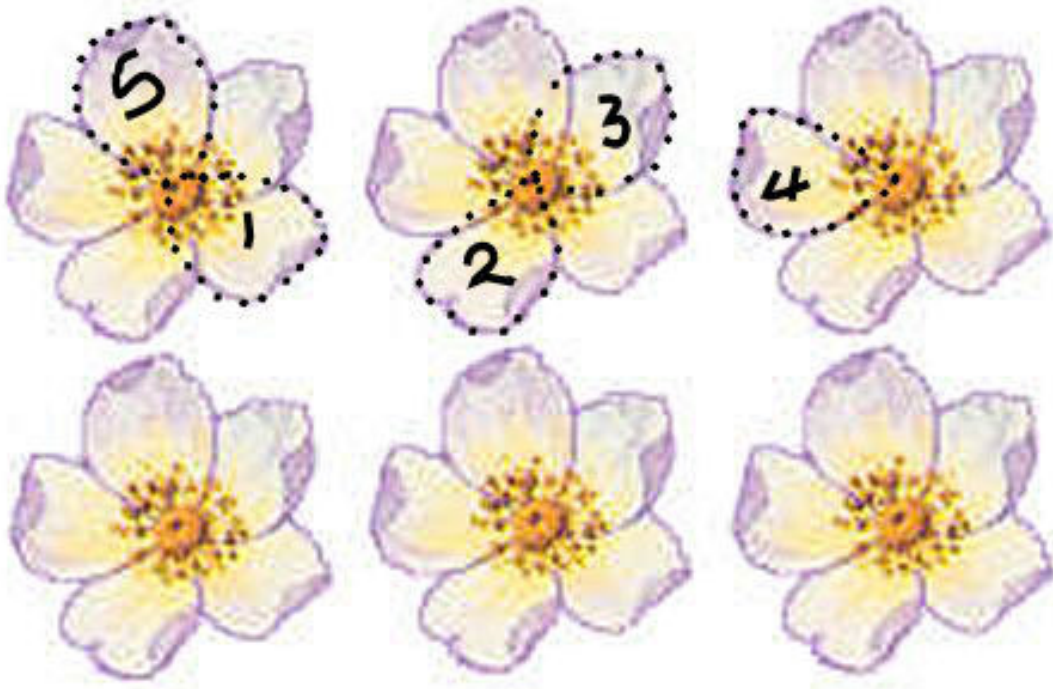
When using a simple flower the petals are just cut along the natural line of the petal towards the centre of the flower being careful not to cut right through. Each petal is then shaped from the underside of the paper. After shaping the flower flip it over and press down in the centre to make the petals stand up.

Petals can be shaped on either side of the paper depending on whether the flower is concave (shape on the top of the paper) or convex (shape on the underside of the paper). I will show you the difference during the class.

Cutting the Petals

Depending on how many flowers you wish to use will determine how many copies of the flowers you need to print off. For this simple flower you will need 3 copies per flower, with a petal to spare from the 3rd flower.

I've enlarged these so you can see the petal placement and how they are cut from the flower. The same principle applies to other flowers as well. When you cut out the petals you cut the petal (shown by the dotted lines) as though you are able to see the whole petal. This ensures when the flower is re-assembled there are no gaps cut out of the underlying petals.



Shaping the Petals

Each petal of the flower will be shaped in the same manner. Keep the flowers in number order so you know which petal is which.

Use a ball stylus or a dished leather tool to shape the first petal.

Curve the top of the petal on the front or printed side of the paper.

Shape either side of the petal going from the top to the centre point of the petal.

Use a ball stylus or the rounded end of a crochet hook to dish (shape) the centre of the petal



Flip the shaped petal over and press down on the centre tip to straighten it.

Repeat the procedure for each petal.

Leaves are shaped from underneath in a similar manner using the point of the leather tool to press down on the centre vein of the leaf on the printed side of the paper. Alternatively you can use a toothpick or a pick to do this.

Assembling the Flower

There are a couple of ways this can be done. If you are using something like a Sonie Ames print and want to simulate the shading from the print, a flat cut-out image of the flower is first be glued onto the shell.

Using chalks and a cotton bud (Q-tip) or a soft brush, colour the area around the print as desired to replicate the shading around the original image. Seal the shading using a spray fixative or a brush on sealer. Assemble the shaped petals using the flat image as a guide as to where each petal should go. The underlying print has the effect of making the flower appear more 3D, as it looks like there are two layers of petals in the flower. This procedure is very appealing when used for the top of a trinket box.

The second method allows a bit more creativity in the placement of the flowers, in that they can be placed anywhere on the egg, either following a scroll line, lattice panel or opening of a diorama.

Using tweezers to hold the top of petal #1, dip the centre tip in thick tacky or clear silicon and position the petal with the tip touching the egg. Repeat the procedure with petal #2, overlapping the edge of the first petal. Use an uncut copy of the flower as a guide to the petal placement.

Continue with the remainder of the petals until the flower is re-assembled on the egg. Position other flowers in groups of odd numbers, using some smaller flower partially hidden by larger flowers. Tuck some buds and leaves into the gaps to complete the scene.

Hints & Tips

- Don't be tempted to cover the back of the petals with glue – the glue or silicon should only be used where the shaped paper actually touches the shell of other parts of the flower.
- If you want more height behind a petal use a small dot of silicon rather than glue as the glue tends to flatten the shaping. The silicon will cushion the petal and hold it up. Make sure the silicon isn't visible when viewing the flowers from all angles.
- When using paper tole on a filigree egg mark the egg using draft prints (to save ink) as these will be washed off after the egg is cut and soaked in bleach. Use a digital camera to photograph the egg close up at all angles going around the shell. This is a big help when trying to determine what goes where when you come to replace the prints.

Stiffening the Flowers

This can be done in a number of ways and you will quickly determine which your favourite is.

- To give the flowers a porcelain appearance coat alternating petals with Petal Porcelain or a similar product from the craft store. Do not coat adjoining petals as they will stick together. Once the first round of petals are dry got back and repeat with the other petals. You may need 6 – 10 coats depending on the degree of hardness desired.
- Use 3D Crystal Lacquer, Dimensional Magic, J's Complete Coat or one of the many stiffening agents now available from craft stores. As above the number of coats required will depend on the product used.
- If all else fails even a coat of tacky glue or clear nail polish applied to each alternate petal will also work.

Have fun experimenting with this technique and watch your egg designs come alive!