

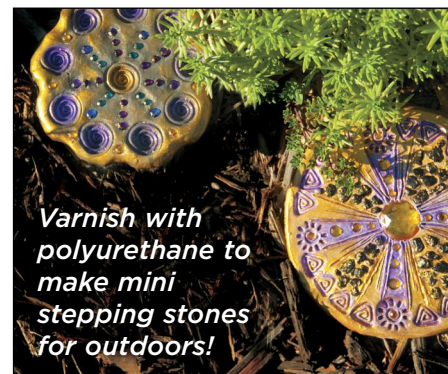
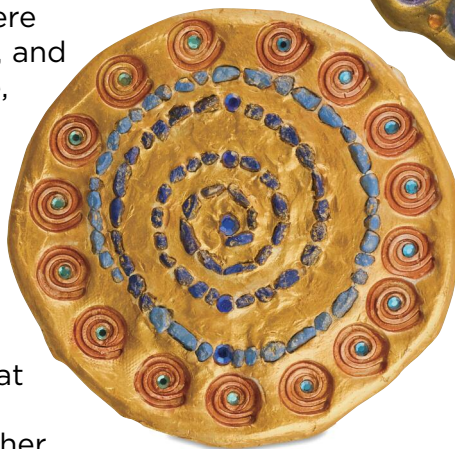
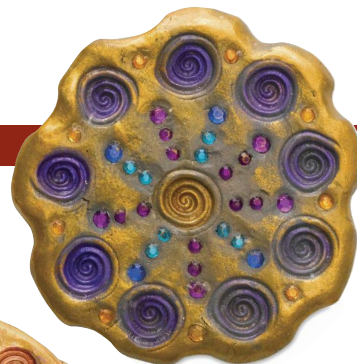
Byzantine Medallions (art + history)

The wealthy Byzantine Empire had a huge influence on personal ornamentation. There were many gold mines within its borders, and the location of its capital, Constantinople, was perfect for trade between East and West. Characterized by extensive iconography, Byzantine jewelry was often an outward symbol of faith. Badges, pendants and medallions were widely produced to denote a person's office or rank.

In 529 AD, Emperor Justinian decreed that only the nobility was allowed to wear sapphires, emeralds and pearls, but all other precious stones, gold and silver could be worn by any social class. The fact that he made such a decree indicates that precious gemstones and metals were widely available at the time.

For this project, students use air-dry clay and colorful rhinestones to create their own Byzantine-style medallions. Gilded with gold powder and finished with a gloss coating, these medallions can be used as ornaments or placed outdoors as mini stepping stones and garden decor.

Grade Levels K-12



Varnish with polyurethane to make mini stepping stones for outdoors!

Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 25 students. Adjust them as needed.

Preparation

1. Divide the clay and place it in zip-lock plastic bags until you are ready to use it.
2. Cut 5" Dia circles out of



Materials

Amaco® Self-Hardening Clay, 5-lb package, White (33247-1005), Gray (33204-2505) or Red (33205-3005); share one package among 10 students



Jacquard® Pearl-Ex Pigment®, .75-oz jar, assorted colors (27103-); share at least one jar among the class



Wooden Rolling Pins, 6" (30345-1006); share four to five among the class



Blick® No. 12 Heavy Weight Canvas, 36" (07301-1036); share 1 yard among the class

Blick® Economy Pony Hair Round Brushes, size 4 (05105-2004); one per student



Student Clay Modeling Tools, set of 7 (30361-1009); share three sets among the class



Jo Sonya's Water Based Polyurethane Varnish, gloss, 8-oz (00712-1065); share two bottles among the class

Optional Materials

Creativity Street® Rhinestones, package of 375, (61762-1001); share one package among the class



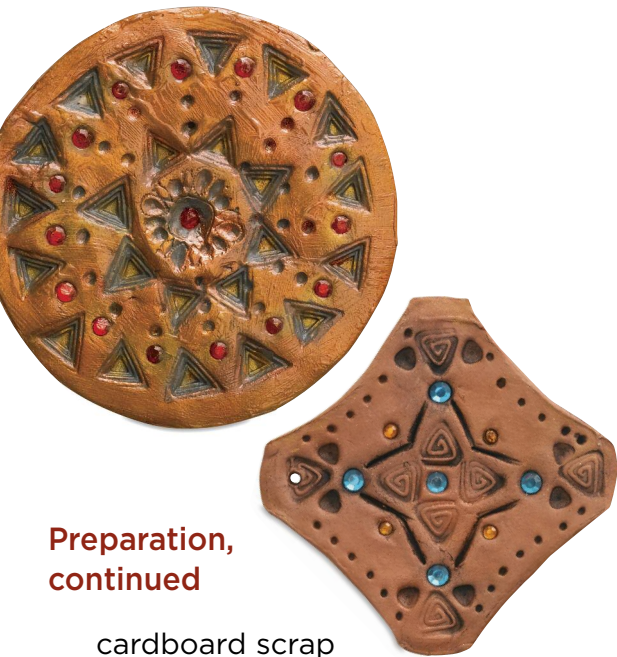
Crushed Pebbles, assorted colors, 5-lb bags (61005-); share two to three colors among the class



Acrylic Gems, 1-lb bag (60722-0001); share one bag among the class

Mayco® Press Tools, small set of 6 designs (30390-1006)

Foam Brush, 2" (05114-1002), for applying varnish



Preparation, continued

cardboard scrap to use as templates.

3. Cut the canvas into 7" x 7" pieces.

Process

1. Form the clay into a ball and flatten it with your hand onto a 7" x 7" piece of canvas. Roll over it with the rolling pin until the clay is about 1/4" thick. Place the circle template on top of the clay and trim the edge with a plastic knife or tool. Smooth the edges with your fingers, turn the clay over and smooth out the reverse side.

2. Press items into the clay to create patterns. Use press tools or stamps and incorporate "jewels" — acrylic gems and rhinestones. Colorful, crushed pebbles can be used to mimic the look of semi-precious stones such as turquoise, carnelian, obsidian, white agate or lapis.

Incorporate a hanging hole in the design, leaving at least 1/4" of clay around it.

3. Once the front of the medallion is designed, turn it over and carve lines in the back of the clay. These lines will help keep the clay from warping or forming cracks as it dries.
4. Allow the medallion to harden on the canvas piece, turning it frequently so that it dries gradually and evenly. A complete cure will take about 48 hours. As water evaporates from the clay, the medallion will shrink a little around the gems and stones, holding them in place like grout.



Step 1: Roll out a slab of clay 1/4" thick, cut out a circle and create a design with press tools, gems and pebbles.



Step 2: Turn the piece over and carve lines into the reverse side to help the clay dry evenly.



Step 3: Smooth Pearl-Ex Pigment over the clay.



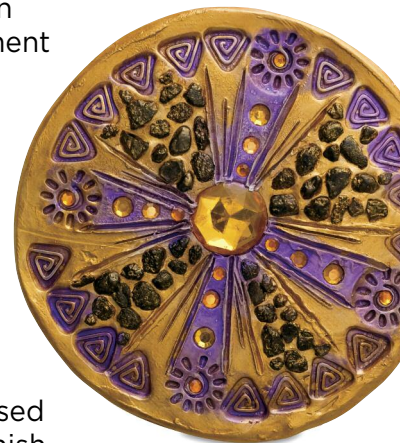
Step 4: Seal the medallion with gloss polyurethane for outdoor display.

5. Pearl-Ex Pigment may be applied while the clay is still wet or at any time during the drying process. If the surface of the clay is too hard or the pigment is not sticking well, dampen the surface slightly with a wet towel.

Apply Pearl-Ex in small amounts with your fingertips, smoothing it over the clay. A small brush or cotton swab may be used to apply the pigment between the gems and work it into textured areas. For an "antique" look, brush Carbon Black pigment into the textures, wipe away the excess and then smooth Aztec Gold pigment over the top surface.

6. Use a damp paper towel to remove any pigment from the gems. Turn the medallion over and apply Pearl-Ex to the reverse side.

7. When the medallion is completely hard, seal it with non-toxic, water-based acrylic polyurethane varnish.



Process, continued

Apply two coats for indoor display or four coats for outdoor display. Apply it in thin layers and allow it to dry completely between coats.

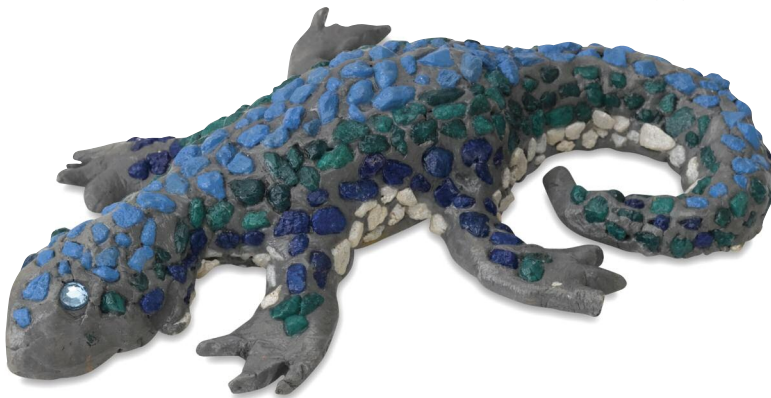
8. Hang the medallion with a string or ribbon, or display it in a garden setting as a mini stepping stone.

Options

1. Make smaller medallions to wear as jewelry.
2. Create two-sided medallions and display them as hanging ornaments.
3. Form clay around a wooden dowel to make a scepter and display it in a planter (see A).
4. Make small sculptures instead of medallions (see B).



(B)



National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #2 – Using knowledge of structures and functions.

- K-4** Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses.
- 5-8** Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work.
- 9-12** Students demonstrate the ability to form and defend judgments about the characteristics and structures to accomplish commercial, personal, communal or other purposes of art.

Content Standard #4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

- K-4** Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures.
- 5-8** Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts.
- 9-12** Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times and places.