

Cast Handmade Paper

Handmade paper is beautiful in itself. If you add dimension and shape, it becomes a work of art.

The three-stage process of paper casting is well worth the time. Once a mold is created, it can be used over and over again for countless castings. Finished pieces can be left the color of the paper or enhanced with watercolor, tempera, acrylic, ink, pencil or pastel.

Grade Levels 5-12

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25. Adjust as needed.

Process

1. Create three-dimensional image in clay

Place 2 layers of masking tape on each seam of a small cardboard box. Box should be taped inside and out to prevent plaster from leaking.

Cover the inside of the box with a thin layer of clay (1/4" or less).

Create a design in the clay, taking care to fill undercuts and smooth seams. The clay image should be at least 1/2" below the top of the box.

2. Pour plaster mold

In mixing bowl, pour out two cups plaster and add one cup cold water. Blend with spatula until smooth and creamy.

Scrape the sides of the bowl frequently and use the flat side of the spatula to press out any lumps.

Pour plaster quickly over clay image in the box. Plaster should reach top edge of box. Tap box to release air bubbles.

Allow several hours for the plaster to cure completely.



Materials

Small cardboard box, one per student

Blick® All-Use Masking Tape, 1" (23006-1001); share five rolls across class

Modeling Clay 1-lb, Cream (33211-1106); block, need 1/4 block per student

Student Clay Modeling Tools, 7-piece set (30361-1009); share 4 sets across class

Plaster of Paris (33531-1008), an 8-lb box will make about 30 castings

Abaca Pulp (12894-1370) 24" x 32" sheet, need one sheet per class

Castin' Craft™ Mold Release, 4-oz spray, (33588-1004); need two bottles per class

Cellulose Sponge (32901-1001), one per student

3M™ Sandpaper, medium grit (34916-1403), package of ten 9" x 11" sheets, need one package per class

OPTIONAL:

X-Acto® Snap-Off Blade Knife (57494-4010)

Arnold Grummer's™ Cotton Linters (12878-1012)

Process, continued

4. Prepare paper pulp

Tear the pulp into small pieces and loosely fill the blender, add 2 cups of water. Blend for 3 minutes. You may add cotton lintners or recycled paper for strength and color. Use a strainer over a bowl to remove excess water from the pulp.

Spray plaster mold with release agent, allow to dry and gently pour in paper pulp. Press down firmly on the pulp with a sponge to fill the mold as completely as possible and to remove excess water.

Paper pulp should dry for approximately 48 hours. Using a fan or placing in a sunny location will speed up the drying time.

5. Remove cast paper from mold

Loosen the edges of the paper pulp and carefully remove it from the plaster mold.

Options

Here are some ideas for the finished paper casts:

- Glue to the front of cards, journals, boxes, albums, frames or books.
- Glue or tie a ribbon onto the paper cast to make ornaments, jewelry, gift tags, or wall hangings.
- Paint the surface of the paper cast with watercolor, tempera, acrylic, or ink. Draw on it with pencil, pastel, or watercolor pencils.

Lesson Plan and Artwork submitted by
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National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 – Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use

