

Paper Maki-e Faux Japanese Lacquerware

(art + social studies)

For thousands of years, the process of converting tree resin into lacquer to add beauty and longevity to everyday objects has been practiced and perfected by Asian craftsmen. The techniques developed in ancient Japan are the most highly regarded as fine art.

“Raden” lacquerware is designed with intricate details of mother-of-pearl, inlaid wood and precious metals. Perhaps the most beautiful lacquerware ever produced is “Maki-e,” which translates as “sprinkle pictures”. Artists carve or inlay designs into a piece, then sprinkle gold, silver, or colored powders onto the wet lacquer surface. When dry, the powders become permanently affixed.

To make an easy, contemporary version of this craft, create the illusion of inlaid metal or pearl with acrylic-painted paper applied to a board. Coat the surface with a clear, glossy acrylic and sprinkle powdered pigments while it is wet.

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

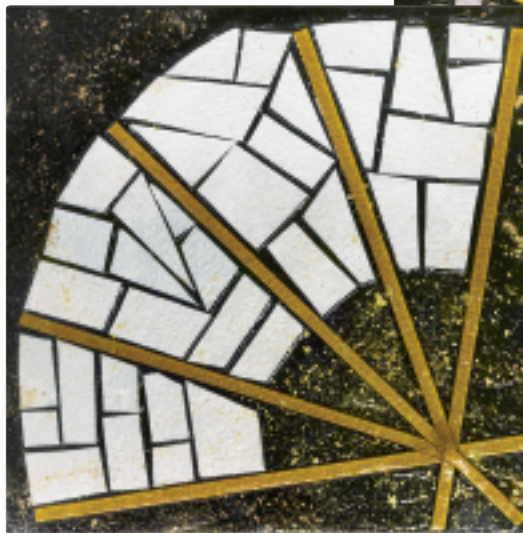
Grade Levels 3-12

Preparation

1. Cut construction paper sheets into fourths, need one each color per student
2. View examples of lacquerware and other Japanese art forms, such as painting, silk painting, woodcuts, etc.
3. Suggested resource book:
Hands On Culture of Japan (71836-0002)

Process

1. Coat one side and the edges of a board with black acrylic paint and allow to dry. Paint reverse side as well.
2. Make preliminary sketches on a separate piece of paper. This piece will be assembled like a mosaic, with individual pieces placed so that they form a whole picture. Advance planning



Materials

[All-Purpose Chipboard](#) (13115-2236), cut with paper cutter to 5" x 7" for 32 pieces per board, need one piece per student

[Blick Matte Acrylic](#), black (00727-2023), need one bottle to cover 12 pieces

[Blick 80-lb Premium Construction Paper](#), Gold (11409-4073), Silver (11409-2593), White (11409-1023) and Brown (11409-8033), 9" x 12" sheets, need 1/4 sheet each color per student

[Blick Glue Sticks](#), white, small (23872-1010) need one per student

[Jacquard® Pearl-Ex Pigment](#), Aztec Gold (27103-9185), need one jar per class

[Blickrylic Polymer Gloss Medium](#), quart (00711-1027) need one bottle per class

[Snippy® Scissors](#), pointed (57040-2005), need one per student

[Blick Economy Graphite Pencils](#) (20302-2009), box of 12, need one per student

[Blick Economy Camel Hair brushes](#), size 4 (05153-1004), one per student

Process, continued

will help the end results. Students will use a limited palette of colors, just as Japanese artisans worked with inlaid metal, mother-of-pearl and wood to create each design.

4. Distribute one piece of each color of painted paper to each student. Cut shapes out of the painted pieces of paper, based on the sketches. Simple geometric shapes can be cut directly out of the paper. For more complex shapes, turn the paper over and draw it out on the back first, then cut.
4. Secure the shapes to the board using a glue stick. Reposition if needed and remove any excess glue with a paper towel or tissue.
5. Once the entire mosaic is assembled on the board, brush a generous coat of Acrylic Gloss Medium over the entire surface of the piece. Allow it to dry and apply a second coat. While second coat is still wet, sprinkle Pearl-Ex powdered pigment into the surface for the look of "Maki-e" lacquerware. For a controlled way to distribute the Pearl-Ex, dip a soft camel-hair brush into the powder and tap it once on the side of the jar. Hold the brush over the surface and tap the brush lightly with forefinger to release the powder into the wet coating. A light application is best. Once the gloss medium is dry, remove any excess powder by gently blowing on it.

Options

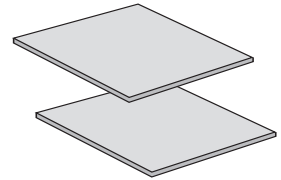
1. Chipboard may be formed into a bowl/sushi plate with a plaster "slump" mold (34102-1010), see example at right. Before painting, moisten the chipboard piece with water using a spray bottle. Press into the mold and allow to dry.
2. The colors of paint and powdered pigments specified in process create a very traditional look. Experimentation with other colors will produce varied effects.
3. This process could be adapted to create Maki-e designs on wood panels, pottery, maché boxes, jewelry and more.

Options, continued

4. Create a box from heavy chipboard using the following process:

a) Cut two pieces the same size for a top and bottom.

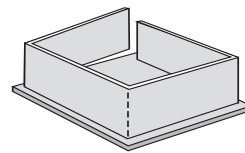
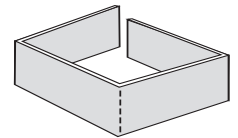
For example, cut two 5" x 5" pieces.



b) Cut one strip for the sides of the box. Determine size by adding the total of the sides of the base, then subtracting 1/2". For example, with 5" base, cut a 19-1/2" strip. Using a ruler, mark lines across the chipboard strip, dividing it into fourths.

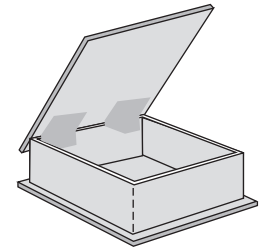


c) Using the ruler as a guide, score along the marks on the strip with a Blick E-Z Grip Knife (57419-2980). To score, cut a line about halfway through the depth of the chipboard on one side. Bend the corners inward along the score lines to a box shape, then join the ends with a piece of Gummed Kraft Paper Tape (23013-8302).



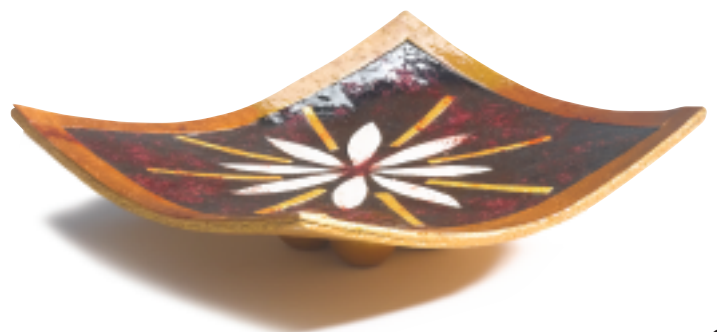
d) Apply a narrow line of glue to the edge of the edge of the folded box shape and join it to the base, taking care to place it in the center. Use a paper towel to wipe away any excess glue.

e) Center the lid on the top of the box and hinge from the inside with two pieces of gummed paper tape, see illustration at right.



f) Decorate by painting or covering with paper on all surfaces.

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National Standards

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 apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks

Content Standard #3 — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

- 5-8** Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks
- 9-12** Students evaluate and defend the validity of sources for content and the manner in which subject matter, symbols, and images are used in the students' works and in significant works by others

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

- 5-8** Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry
- 9-12** Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works