

## *Oh What a Relief! - Fabulous Tooling Foil*

### **MATERIALS:**

- 36 gauge tooling foil; aluminum or other
- Felt (for padding) or other substitute, such as a mousepad. Felt will give you deepest relief.
- Masking tape, scissors, pencils, ball point pens
- Tools: tongue depressors, pop sticks, pointed wooden sticks; plastic or wooden modeling tools – ball end, spatula end, etc.
- India ink, soap, paintbrushes, steel wool
- As desired, for adding color: permanent markers and/or acrylic paints with Mod Podge or gloss medium
- As desired, for embellishments: yarn, raffia, beads, various backing surfaces

### **GETTING STARTED:**

- Draw intended image using outline shapes only, with pencil on newsprint. Draw to size. Three notes:
  - All lines should touch another line or edge to make completed shapes. Line designs and intricate patterns will be added later.
  - Sharp corners are more difficult to tool than rounded shapes. Use this in your planning.
  - Remember, save small details to add later.
- Tape your drawing to tooling foil. Using a permanent marker, mark the back to avoid later confusion or error while tooling (write your name or make other identifying mark. It may need to be re-written later).
- Place (foil w/drawing taped on top) on one piece of felt. Firmly trace the image using a ball-point pen; remove drawing when done tracing.
- Placing foil right side up on two layers of felt, retrace lines firmly with a blunt pointed tool. Make sure the tool is not too sharp; you don't want to puncture the foil!
- Using a sharp scissors, cut the foil to shape leaving a margin of 1/4 to 1/2" all around the outside, rounding points as possible. Discard leftover foil to avoid injury. On a hard flat surface (no felt), use a pop stick or spatula to flatten outer margins. This will reduce sharpness.
- Important! Make sure the back is still marked with your name. Check frequently.

### **TIME TO TOOL:**

- Before you start tooling, decide what will be raised, and what will be left flat. One you push the foil in one direction, it will weaken and wrinkle if you change your mind. \*Note: If you want to also create deeply recessed areas, you can, but keep in mind that the finished piece will not be flat.
- Start tooling!
  - For **raised areas**, work from the **back**, on at least two layers of felt. Use a rounded tool (ball end tool, tongue depressor or pop stick) to begin pushing out.
  - For **flat areas**, work from the **front**, with no felt underneath (on a hard table surface). Use a pop stick or spatula to smooth foil. As you work, you can also re-flatten outer margin in this matter.
  - For **recessed areas** (not recommended), work from the **front**, with felt underneath.
- Turn over frequently and redefine edges of shapes being tooled, using a flat sided tool or blunt pointed tool as appropriate.
- Continue, tooling from the back, or flattening from the front as desired, adding layers of felt to achieve deeper relief as you tool. **\*\*All surfaces of the foil should be tooled or flattened for best results.**
- If, while working deep relief, the foil splits or is punctured, push together and tape it on the back with masking tape. It should not be visible when complete. Be gentle when tooling around broken areas.

## **IT IS TIME FOR PATTERN AND TEXTURE (After relief is complete & edges of shapes have been redefined):**

- Add pattern/texture using a pointed wooden stick or other pointed tool with a layer (or 2) of felt under.
- Add pattern/texture to RAISED areas working from the BACK.
- Add pattern/texture to FLAT areas working from the FRONT.
- If you have any RECESSED areas, add pattern/texture working from the FRONT.
- For an interesting look, you can use the back end of the wooden stick to make tiny circles.
- Finished pieces will usually look best when rich pattern and texture are used throughout.

## **ANTIQUING WITH BLACK INK (After all tooling, pattern, and texture are complete):**

- Important: tooled/textured areas will look fabulous with ink antiquing; un-tooled areas will not! Encourage tooling/flattening/texturing of ALL areas of foil for the best final product.
- Place newspaper underneath. \*Make sure your name is still on the back, either with marker or on tape.
- Paint front surface lightly with some bar soap, or try a sprinkle of baby powder – this helps the ink adhere to the foil. If you use too much soap, the end product will feel greasy, so just use a little.
- Paint the entire surface with India ink. Test different brands; some look different than others.
- Let dry. When completely dry, with newspaper underneath, gently remove ink with steel wool until the desired affect is achieved. Carefully empty newspaper into garbage.

## **ADDING SELECTIVE COLOR**

- Color can be added with acrylic paint, but antiquing will get lost in the process if the paint is opaque. To prevent this, add a little Mod Podge or other acrylic gloss medium to the paint to make it translucent. Brush on lightly with a single stroke, to avoid disturbing black ink that remains in crevasses of the design.
- Or, use permanent markers. Beware, if you have antiqued the piece using ink, the markers will pick up black ink and soap on their tips; clean them by scribbling the points on the back of the piece or elsewhere. Test colors on the back; don't just use Sharpies. (Try other brands for color variation.)

## **EMBELLISHING IDEAS**

- Use a hole-punch to create areas to add embellishment. In the holes, string beads on yarn, add raffia, or other embellishments as desired.
- Bend, twist, or twirl edges of the foil.

## **DISPLAYING IDEAS**

- Use low temp hot-glue to adhere to mat board scraps. (Ask your local framer for mat board discards)
- Incorporate into collage or sculptural pieces
- Attach a dowel rod to the back and insert in a wooden block for a free-standing piece.

## **JUST A FEW IDEAS FOR SUBJECT MATTER THAT WORKS WELL**

- Masks inspired by those from various cultures – African, Egyptian, Mayan, etc.
- Medieval theme - shields (coat of arms), illuminated letter, castles
- Fish, lizards, snakes, birds, dragons, trees, robots, celestial images, etc. Use your imagination.
- Mexican mirrors
- Totem poles
- Abstract design

## **VOCABULARY WORDS:**

- **Repoussé:** technique in which a metal is shaped from the reverse side to create a design in low relief; the word repoussé comes from the French pousser, which means “to push forward.”
- **Relief:** raised from the background plane
- **Intaglio:** impressed below the surface; engraved

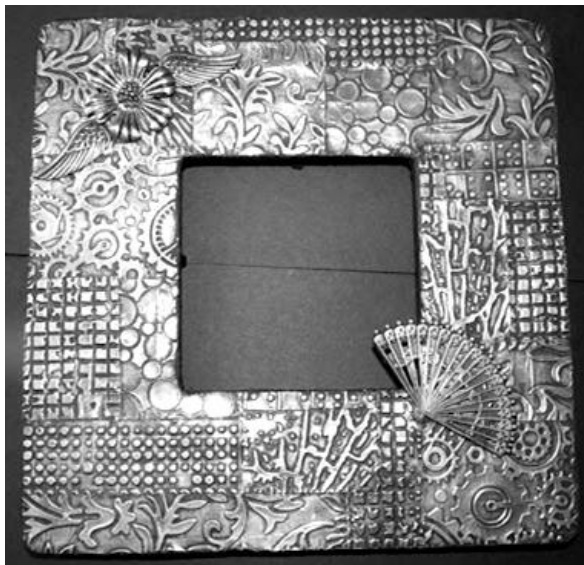
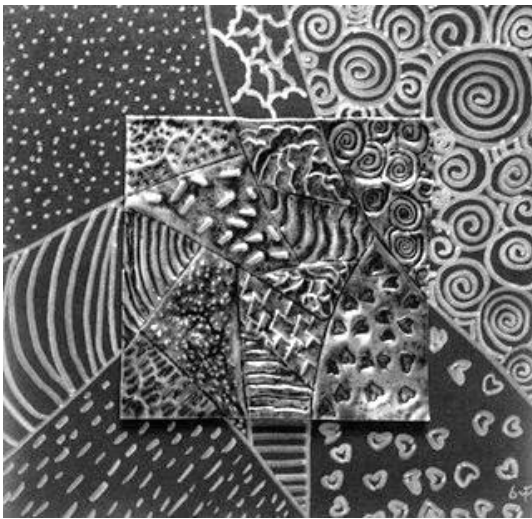


Tooling foil masks by 6<sup>th</sup> grade students





Tooling foil ideas/samples found on internet





Images from  
the Museum of  
International Folk Art  
in Santa Fe NM

