

# Paper craft is ancient fine art

In researching "paper crafting" one discovers that it is not just a hobby, but a fine art which attracts artists of all media. Masters such as Pablo Picasso have found, in collage, a medium for their work.

Many forms of paper craft originated in Europe. Decoupage, for example, can be found in a book of prayers made for Henry VII. Paper art shows its roots in China (the country where paper was invented in the year 105 AD, wasps being the original paper makers). Later in history, paper coins and paper sculptures began to replace objects traditionally found in Chinese and Japanese tombs. Early examples of paper ornaments used in houses and gardens, on dresses and in hair, have survived the centuries.

## Craftnotes

*Karen Grimes and Linda Conde*

Shadow-theatre puppets and silhouettes came to be a form of entertainment. Jonathon Swift scribed a poem about one of his lady friends cutting silhouettes from paper and silk.

Many kinds of papers exist today, such as handmade, machine made, heavy and light papers. The heaviest of papers is bristol board; the lightest is crepe paper. Handmade paper has the distinction of being very well

finished, tough, reliable, and attractive. It is formed on a mold, dipped into a vat of paper pulp and spread out to dry. Machine made papers are pressed between rollers and left to dry. They can appear to be just as attractive as handmade papers, but are less expensive.

There are very few tools required for paper work. A sharp pair of scissors is important, as well as craft knives, punches, straight edges, and

brushes for glue and paint. Any piece of paper can be used for many different projects. Family photographs and Christmas cards can be worked in "tole", as can many other paper pictures. Tole or "vue d'optique" is the name given to three dimensional paper art.

Somewhat more challenging is the paper art of "pin prick". Using just a needle fixed in a handle and a piece of paper you can turn out a very creditable pin prick picture. One type of pin pricking allows you to paint the hands and face of a figure and only the costume or dress is pin pricked. Another method is the reverse, where the entire background is pin pricked, the figure left in outline, and the hands and face colored.

We can only mention a few of the dozens of techniques and possibilities of paper as an art form. You can learn paper tearing, frottage (a paper rubbing technique), paper sculpture and modelling, or stencilling. Why not try something new — the art of paper.

The winners of door prizes at the Markham Guild of Village Crafts annual Christmas Sale on November 14 were: 1st prize — Erika Ranghel (age 7), 2nd prize — Maureen Bachetti, 3rd prize — Evelyn Willer. All winners were from the Markham area.

Don't forget the mini-sales at the Guild building, 98 Church Street in Markham. They will be held every Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. until Christmas.

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