



Decoupage for Memory Boxes

by Gloria Falk, TDA

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This is a process I go through to make multiple copies of my work and use on Memory Boxes. It is a form of Decoupage. The following instructions will show several pictures I have been working with.

Get a pre-gessoed masonite board, or you can use a piece of MDF board and gesso it yourself.



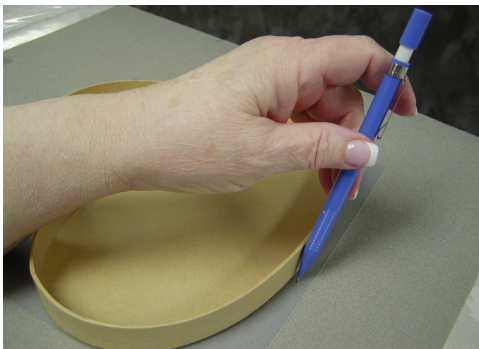
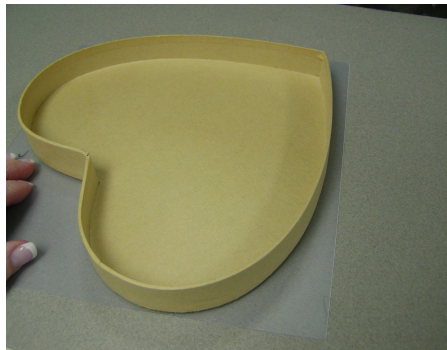
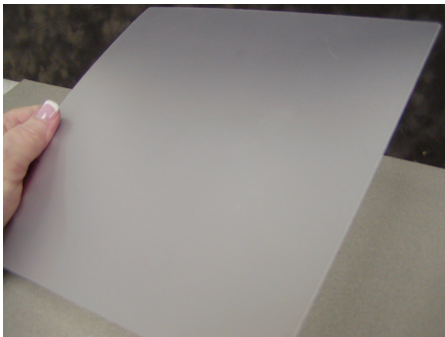
Basecoat it a color of your choice. Paint your design on this board. Do not varnish or seal it with a spray. Be sure to sign it. On the back of the board – indicate what color you used as a background color.



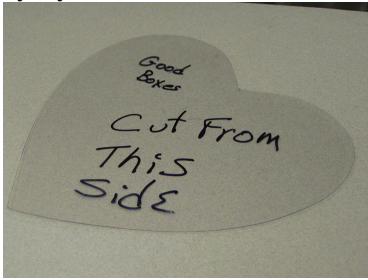
Take this to an office supply store –or- another store of your liking that does quality work in their copies. Have prints made. I usually get them copied on 28 # paper. It is a little heavier. Cardstock can also be used.



Next, using a piece of plastic film, make a template of the top of the box. This film can be clear or frosted – it will not matter. This will make it easier to cut the prints when doing a lot of them.



Mark the template which side is “up” this will be the side to cut the print from. As hard as they may try, these boxes are not the same on both sides.



Position the template on top of your print, then trace the shape lightly with a pencil.



Next you will cut out your print.



Spray 2 light coats of a clear acrylic sealer on the front of the print and 1 coat on the back. Allow to dry. This seals the ink in the printing process.



Be certain to remove any sticky tags from your boxes.



Basecoat your paper maché box. The entire bottom should be painted inside and out and giving it at least two coats over all surfaces. More if needed.



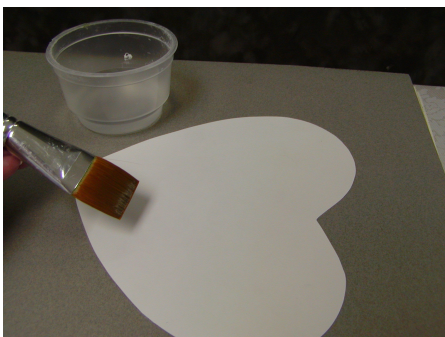
When doing the top, you want to choose the same color background as you used in your original painting. Then paint the inside of the top, the lip and just ease in on the top of the lid about 1/4 inch or so. (It is not necessary to paint the entire top.)



I use Minwax Polycrylic varnish. Any polyurethane should work. I buy it by the gallon as we do so many boxes. You could use Mod Podge for paper also. Stir the product well before using it. Pour some out into a smaller container to work out of.



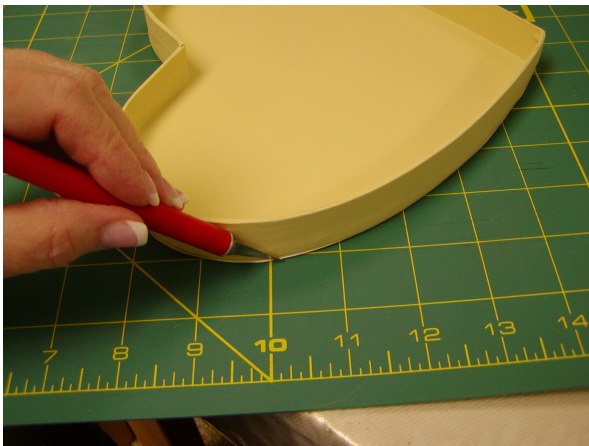
Put one thin coat on the box top - then flip the print over and put one thin coat of the back of the print. Work as quickly as you can on this step.



Position the print on the top of the box and move it around to fit the box properly. Push with your (dry) fingers from the inside center toward the outside edge. You can use a brayer for this step, if you wish. You are squeezing the excess air & varnish out from under the print. Double check to make sure you have good contact on all edges. If not, just add a little varnish under it and press down again.



Let this dry a few minutes then carefully trim any excess print hanging over the edge of the box, with an Exacto knife. Using a cutting mat helps with this process or cut carefully with a small sharp scissors.



(NOTE: If you have the copies printed on cardstock you may have to paint the edge of the paper to match the side of the lid of the box. Since this is heavier paper – you will see the cut away white of the paper.) Allow this to dry at the very least 4 hrs. but 8 hrs. is better, before adding any extra coats of varnish on top. Doing it any sooner and the prints may buckle.

Varnish the top, sides, and insides of the entire box with at least 2 coats.



Wrap the brush in a plastic bag in between coats, this keeps it wet. Doing this makes it unnecessary to wash it out all of the time. You should also cover the container of varnish.



After the last coat of varnish, let them dry overnight, with a fan going in the room to keep the air circulating. When you have several of these being done at one time, the humidity rises quite a bit.



Next wax the edge of the lid and the top of the box bottom. I use JW's Painters wax. This process keeps the lid from sticking to the bottom.



Always add a poem inside the box.



To ready them for shipping – put the bottom into a plastic bag ...push the point of the heart into the corner of the bag (Step 1)...then put the lid on the box – (Step 2). Wrap the remaining plastic over the top of the heart – (Step 3). This method will protect each of them in shipment.



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3

Now think of it.....after you paint the ONE design.....you can do multiple boxes of this beautiful design without all of the time it takes to do just one.

NOTE: The method of using Decoupage techniques can also be used with heavyweight wrapping paper or scrapbook paper.

I hope you try this method of doing Memory Boxes. It does allow you to paint the intricate design one time and then make multiple copies of your work. It saves a lot of time. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to email me.

Gloria Falk, TDA
arttouch@aol.com