

Crafts

Easy Paper Flowers

Kathy Cano-Murillo ~ The Arizona Republic

If you are into handmade decorations, paper flowers are the way to go. Non-crafty types can even get into the spirit because it only involves simple accordion folding - a la kindergarten class. There are more elaborate, artistic ways to create paper flowers, but for starters this method is just right for adding a splash of vibrant color to a table centerpiece or place setting.

Supplies:

1 package of multicolored tissue or crepe paper

1 package of green pipe cleaners

Scissors

Directions: Take four to five sheets of the tissue paper and layer them (if you want multicolored flowers, use different colors). Cut into 8-inch squares. Keeping the sheets layered, take one set of squares and fold it like an accordion so it looks like a thin rectangle. At the center of the rectangle, cut a small v-shaped notch on both sides. Take the end of a pipe cleaner and twist it around the notch. With the stem pointing straight down, gently pull up one layer of tissue into the center. Pull up the remaining layers, one by one. Repeat for the other side of the flower. Once all the layers are pulled up, fluff them in place to look natural. Continue making more flowers with the remaining stacks of squares.

Tips and variations: For sturdier stems, wrap two pipe cleaners together. Cut smaller or larger squares to change the size of your flowers. Add more layers for thicker flowers or less layers for thinner ones. For a shiny effect, dip the top edges in white glue and then dip in loose glitter. Glue a pin on the back of a flower for a fluffy lapel decoration. Make smaller flowers and string them together as garland.

(Adapted from <http://www.azcentral.com/ent/dead/crafts/paperflowers.html>)

Papel Picado

Making things out of colored tissue paper has long been a Mexican folk tradition. One of the common names for the material, papél de China, or Chinese paper, gives us a clue as to its origin. Paperwork was apparently among the imports that poured in from the Orient on the annual Pacific treasure fleet that plied its way between

the Far East and Acapulco, laden with such exotic goods as silver, ivory, spices, and porcelain. Once the craft arrived in Mexico it became the basis for many important and widespread folk art forms.

There are examples of papel picado dating back to the early 20th century. Cut from colored tissue paper to simulate lace, papel picado can be seen hanging from Day of the Dead altars and around graves during November. Also during Christmas and other celebrations the papel picado decorates indoor and outdoor festivities in Mexico.

Papel picado is a form of "folk art," meaning that it is a popular traditional art form handed down from generation to generation. In Mexico template patterns cut the designs into stacks of colored tissue paper producing many paper cuts-outs at once from a single pattern.

Materials: 8" x 10" sheets of colored tissue paper, stacked and folded in half like a book

- Scissors
- Straight pins
- String
- Glue
- Pattern

Directions: Pin the pattern to the paper taking care to place the center edge of the pattern on the folded edge of the tissues.

Cut into the pattern and tissue first around the edges to make the border. Then cut out the large "negative" shapes by first puncturing the center of the areas to be cut out and then following the outlines. The small geometric shapes can be cut out by first folding on the dotted lines and then cutting the solid outlines.

When completely cut, unfold and separate the tissues. Fold each tissue along the top edge about 1/2". Apply glue to this flap and wrap each tissue around the string, pressing the glue into the string to secure.

(Adapted from <http://www.nps.gov/archive/tuma/PapelPicado.html>)

Reverse glass painting

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While everyone else uses the same old decorations, you can add a distinctive touch to your altar by whipping together one of these cheery calaca frames. Visit the local dollar store to pick up a batch of small frames and some paint. Give them as gifts or use them at your next fiesta's table setting. You'll be the life of the Day of the Dead party!

Supplies:

1 small frame

Acrylic paints in assorted colors (most importantly, black and white)

Thin, liner paintbrush

Directions:

Take apart the components of the frame. Set the piece of glass on a flat surface. Using the liner brush and black paint, draw a skull on the glass. Let dry. Now paint on flowers and other decorations and let dry. Paint the entire face with white paint. Let dry and put the frame back together.

(Adapted from <http://www.azcentral.com/ent/dead/crafts/glasspainting.html>)