

# Colored Pencil Repoussé

## (art + social studies)

Repoussé (or Repajado in Spanish cultures) is an ancient form of relief sculpture in which a design is pressed into a sheet of metal to create a 3-dimensional surface. Ancient Greeks worked in bronze to decorate armor. Byzantine artists described religious events and persons in bronze and gold.

Mexican and South American artisans have used copper and tin for centuries to produce jewelry and ornamental items. Gold, silver and bronze metals are heated and formed by hammering or using special tools, while copper and tin are suitable for working by hand. Softer metals are usually attached to a permanent base when finished, such as wood, stone or other metals, to retain the shape.

This classroom-friendly repoussé project uses a matte-black aluminum foil sheet and soft colored pencils. Unlike smooth metal foils, the matte surface readily accepts pencil shading. Students can draw on the front and the back of the piece, creating different levels of embossing. The contrast between the patina-colored metal surface and the colored pencils resembles stained glass or enamel inlay.



## Grade Levels 5-12

### Preparation

1. ArtEmboss is easy to cut with scissors, craft knife or paper cutter. Cut sheets in fourths. Cut matboard backing pieces to 4-1/4" x 5-3/4" pieces. Cut drawing paper for sketches the size of the matboard.

### Process

1. Prepare preliminary drawings. Students will need to understand that areas of color will be divided by black embossed lines, so line work is very important. Looking at stained glass examples or patterns may be helpful.
2. Caution students before they begin that the metal is thin and fragile, and can be torn by too much pressure, sharp tools or even overly sharpened pencils. Pencils that are slightly dull make the best tools for this project.
3. Embossing should be done on magazines, newspapers, etc, not on a hard desktop. Center the matboard on the metal sheet and trace the edges with a pencil to form a rectangular border.
4. Center the preliminary drawing within the border. Students can transfer their sketches directly onto the back of the piece by tracing over the lines with a pencil.
5. As students work their drawings with the colored pencils, have them press alternately from the front and back to create varying raised and lowered areas. Blending colors to

## Materials

Amaco® ArtEmboss  
Soft Metal Sheets  
matte black, (60518-2050),  
9-1/2" x 12" sheets, package  
of 12 sheets, need 1/4 sheet  
per student

Prismacolor® Premier  
Pencils, assorted colors  
(20508-), share across  
classroom

Crescent Matboard  
(13007-), 32" x 40" sheet,  
cut to 4-1/4" x 5-3/4"  
pieces for mounting  
finished drawings

Magazines, newspapers,  
etc, to provide a soft work-  
ing surface.

Blick White Drawing Paper  
(10209-) for preliminary  
drawings

## Process, continued

shade and highlight areas will enhance the 3-dimensional effect.

6. When the drawings are completed, have students turn the piece face down and place the matboard on the back. Snip the corners of the metal sheet at an angle towards the matboard on all four corners. Fold the metal sheet around so it's secured to the matboard. Use the side of a pencil to press down and smooth the sides and corners.

## Options

- Use a small piece of ArtEmboss and add a pin back to create a brooch
- Cut matboard in various shapes and wrap ArtEmboss to create circles, letters, photo frames, etc.

## 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 experience 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 #4** — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and culture

**5-8** Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures

**9-12** Students analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making.