

Making Silk Paper

by Judy Gula, Artistic Artifacts

While in Houston for the International Quilt Festival years ago, my good friend Liz Kettle of Textile Evolution demonstrated a silk paper-making technique. That day we immediately had several converts who ran to my booth to purchase the supplies to make their own silk paper. I was asked to post this tutorial on how to create this beautiful textile. The following is the method I was taught:

Supply List

- A pan that has a lip on it (you will use liquid and want to contain it) such as a disposable aluminum cake pan and two small jars
- [Stipple or stencil brush](#) (most brushes will work, but my preference is a stiff brush meant for stippling/pouncing)
- Textile medium — I prefer [Jo Sonja Textile Medium](#)
- Netting/tulle
- [Silk roving](#)

- 1) Cut a piece of netting that is the length of the pan and twice the width of the pan and lay it on the bottom of the pan.
- 2) Place the silk roving and or hankie thinly on the netting. You can also 'trap' extras such as sequins, threads, and more in the silk, just make sure that you have covered both the top and bottom of any the extras.
- 3) Fold the netting over the top. This will keep the brush from pulling the silk up and out of the pan!

- 4) In one of the jars, mix a drop of liquid dish detergent and mostly water. The second jar will contain a mixture of textile medium and water. The more textile medium, the stiffer the silk paper will be; the more water, the softer the paper will be... but remember you cannot go less than a 50/50 ratio of textile medium/water or your silk paper won't stay together.

- 5) First use the liquid soap and water mixture to wet the silk fibers, using the brush to work it in — be rough, not dainty. Then work in the textile medium. I usually use the netting overhang to lift and flip the silk over so I can work the liquids into both sides.
- 6) Work the materials for 5 minutes, then hang the piece (with the netting still on) so that air can circulate on both sides in order to dry quicker. Be sure to use a drip pan or paper underneath to catch drips.
- 7) When the silk paper is dry, the netting will peel right off.

Use your silk paper in art quilts, to embellish wearable art and other fiber and mixed media projects. It's wonderful to stitch on, both by hand or machine.

