

**Making a translucent "float frame" sun dappled leaf collage  
by Barbara Hallman  
November 2011**



In this class, we will learn how to "build" a collage of leaves using layers of silk paper and leaves as a means to soften the background to give the illusion of depth.

About the instructor Barbara Hallman



I am Barbara Hallman, longstanding member of the WWPFG. I love to create simple but beautiful works of art that highlight the wonders of nature's bounty using pressed botanicals. Although I appreciate and enjoy seeing the more complex and elaborate works of art that are possible with pressed botanicals by those who are great international artists, I truly most enjoy those works of art that reflect the simple beauty and joy of nature. I love seeing the shapes and veins and stems of the leaves and the natural wonders of the botanicals. I let those natural elements dictate my artworks.

I enjoy sharing what I've learned with others so that they may delight in their creations. Even though you may not be one of the great pressed flower artists of the world, you can still greatly enjoy creating the most amazing pieces of artwork just by capitalizing on the natural beauty of flowers. I hope you enjoy this little class!

## Materials:

-4 pieces of translucent paper cut neatly to approximate size of frame. (can iron smooth)

-Frame can be a traditional frame or a "float frame." If using the latter, you will get a dreamy translucent effect, especially when it is set in or near a light source. In a window, this picture can appear to be a real tree losing its leaves in autumn.

-Glue (Elmer's, Tacky Glue, etc) and glue applicator such as toothpick or paint brush.

-Assortment of pressed leaves; can be all one kind; all one color, or assortments. Should have a range of sizes from large to medium to small. Leaves best with stems on. I used multi-colored, multi-sized Japanese Maple leaves in this project.

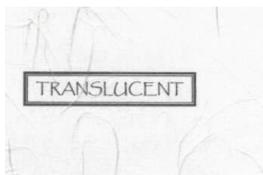
## About the paper

Since the late 18th century, Japan's Awagami Factory has been producing fine art papers characterized by their softness and strength. The first two papers below are from this factory and can be purchased at Jerry's Artarama.

- Tengucho - Machine-made from pure kozo pulp and is acid-free... Thin, yet soft and strong for backing, reinforcing and other conservation treatments . The kozo fibers of machine-made Tengucho are prepared using the same process as handmade Tengucho, resulting in a soft, silky machine-made paper. Tengucho is described as the wings of the May Fly and some of the world's thinnest paper. Gossamer thin. Jerry's Artarama



- Unryushi Sume - Contains long and visible kozo fibers that emerge when light shines on or through the paper. I am guessing this is another name for Sanwa paper. Jerry's Artarama
- Sanwa Tissue Paper w White Fibers ( - Made from Rayon, this Japanese paper is gossamer like and almost weightless although it is very strong. Paper Arts



Sources of these papers:

Jerry's Artarama is one source of the first two of these papers. Look for: Awagami Factory Japanese Papers under Jerry's Artarama.

Paper Arts is a source for sanwa tissue paper with white fibers. Go to their site, or directly to this product at

<http://www.paperarts.com/products/go.cfm?id=ra&e=content>

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### **Directions:**

This class simply shows how to build a flowing leaf picture in layers. The sweeping design seen here is not unique; in fact, it is a fairly common presentation of beautiful leaves that we've seen in many art pieces: beautiful multi-colored fall maple leaves swagging down from above. Still, it's beautiful and lovely in its simplicity, especially when you create subtle backgrounds building up to the foreground, adding great interest and illusion of depth to the picture.

So, all I am doing is creating four layers of leaves glued down on and separated by translucent silk paper. You can use any very translucent paper such as sanwa or Tengucho (see notes on paper above). Since I used sanwa, I will refer to the layering paper as sanwa in this lesson.

I made four layers of sanwa and four layers of leaves all flowing in the same approximate direction, yet complimenting each other as the layers are build up. See photos below:



**Above is my bottom, first layer.** A layer of sanwa is set down, and then I placed and glued leaves down in a simple sweeping line. See how the leaves follow a simple graceful line? Use the stems to propel the direction of the leaves for a sense of movement. I used a simple graceful u-shaped design.



**Now to the next layer.** Place a second piece of translucent paper over the first layer of leaves. Place the second layer of leaves on the second layer of paper, noting where the first layer of leaves is underneath. Set the leaves to create their own line to compliment the first layer. They can cover that first layer somewhat and will have to, but strategically place them to maximize allowing the edges of the leaves in the first layer to show through. In the picture above, you can see that the second layer of leaves still follows the u shape established in the first layer, yet it still allows the background first layer of leaves to show through some.



**On to the third layer:** put another piece of translucent paper down, and then arrange the leaves in the third layer, mindful of the more subtle leaves below. You may use all the same color leaf or a variety of colors and types of leaves. In this project I chose multi-colored maple leaves and tended to start the line with the larger ones and move on to smaller ones.



**And now the fourth layer.** Same technique as before; building your collage of leaves up but still following the u shaped line created with the layers below. Obey your line so that the final project has design integrity (don't be tempted to fill every open space). Notice the subtle leaves in the background, and the more prominent leaves in the foreground; the stems of the leaves create and highlight your line. This completes the picture building. See how the picture glows with depth and a light source behind it? Beautiful!

Now, to frame your piece, you may first wish to tape the four pieces of paper together at the top back using clear tape to join them together. Don't tape the sides; just the top, on the back. If you tape the sides, you may cause the layers to buckle. With tape only at the top, the layers are allowed to lay together easily in the frame. Taping may not be necessary as the glue from the backs of the leaves may have seeped to layers below and secured the layers together.

Cut your layered piece to perfect size, and frame in a regular or a float frame. The effect of the float frame is amazing with light filtering through it as if you have a real sun-dappled tree right in your room or at your window. And the good thing is that fall leaves tend to hold their colors well so exposure to this light is not too damaging. New leaves can be easily added to freshen your picture each year if you wish.

It's a beautiful sight! It's quick; it's easy, and people love these pictures! What's not to love?



And here is one of these pictures framed in a traditional frame. Still looks good.



And a bookmark made of the image:



END OF CLASS--ENJOY!