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Polychrome, A Fascinating Art

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The making of Renaissance Plaques has taken the whole country by storm, and small wonder, when such charming results may be obtained at a fraction of their value.

The pleasure of creation alone is worth more than its cost. Besides the finished products are objects of use and real beauty provided always, of course, they are kept in perfect taste and harmony with the individual requirements of design, finish and coloring. The making of plaques is not an extremely difficult task and can be mastered by almost any one who is interested enough and puts forth the effort.

We will proceed to make a plaque step by step.

1. First thing is the choosing of a good print, colorful and rather deep in value.

All pictures of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries were low in key, and as this is a revival of the art of framing of that day, these deep valued pictures give best results.

2. Apply Johnson's floor wax to face of picture with soft cloth and polish with another after standing a minute or so. When using delicately tinted or hand colored prints the wax should be applied lightly with the finger tips with a circular motion.

3. To have a specially designed frame for your individual picture is one of the charms of this work and is our next step.

In framing it is ever to be borne in mind that the frame is subordinate to the picture itself, and so must never claim more attention to itself, either by shape, ornamentation or coloring; but must lend the support necessary to bring out all qualities predominating in the picture. It was for this reason that Whistler, Monet and others always designed the frames for their own pictures.

While a round frame is most suitable to Raphael's "Madonna of the Chair," as it conforms to the circular lines of the composition; it would not be at all fitting to use on Corot's "Lane Through the Trees," whose rhythm is produced by the repetition of the vertical lines of the trees.

The frames after their design, has been decided upon, may be cut from the ply flr,—or from compe-board by any one familiar with the use of a hand coping saw, or with a band saw.

4. The print is then mounted by evenly coating the back with LePage's glue and applying to face of plaque at the markings, previously made for its placement.

5. Great care should be taken to work from the center of the picture outward with a firm even stroke, so that no air bubbles remain. This pressure needs to be maintained until the glue has set. The warmth from the hands aids as much as does the effort.

6. This step consists of applying a thin coat of Persian Clay to the background past of the frame, stippled with a brush, using a vertical, a twisting or circular motion until clay becomes "tacky," and will remain in this state when dry. See Fig. II.

Clay is then flowed or dragged over built-up places around picture and at outside of frame. Fingers dipped in water prove best means of smoothing and straightening edges. After all wood, everywhere is covered the plaque should be laid away to dry, preferably overnight.

7. Taking off all sharp points and edges by sand paper and knife is shown in Fig. II.

8. A coat of Vernis Martin Bronze using liquids as the medium comes next as shown at left of Fig. IV.

All clay is covered with the gold, and should stand at least two to three hours and longer, if possible.

9. Fig. IV at right, illustrates the applying of antique, to soften the raw gold.

Antique mixture is made of Van Dyke brown, a little burnt sienna and white oil paint (blue) thinned to consistency of very thin cream with turpentine, and is applied to all gold and almost immediately removed with a soft cloth, just moistened with turpentine, using a light rotary motion.

10. Any color of glazing may be applied after two or three hours. This glazing is oil paint, thinned with turpentine, and should in most cases match the middle tone of the predominating color of the picture.