

VOLUME III
SERIES II
OCTOBER 2022

arte

Art and Expression

ART + COMMUNITY

EDUCATION



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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing in Publication Data

No eISSN: 2805-5071

Cover Design: Nur Muhammad Amin Bin Hashim Amir
Typesetting : Syed Alwi Bin Syed Abu Bakar (Dr.)¹
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QUILLING

The perks of creating art pieces using papers

a chapter by

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Introduction

Quilling, also known as paper filigree, is the art of rolling, pinching, shaping, gluing and arranging paper strips to make beautiful designs and decorative patterns. The roll of paper strips can be done with fingers, a pin, a toothpick/skewer, or a slotted tool; a special needle-like instrument tailored for quilling. Colourful strips of papers with different widths and thickness can be quilled to make beautiful patterns for greeting cards, jewellery, boxes, ornaments, miniatures and many more.



Figure 1: Quilling tools

Quilling has been practised for at least 500 years ago (Johnston, 1995). Although there is no clear evident of its origin, quilling was most likely inspired by metal filigree, where silver and gold wires are shaped into intricate designs, which can be found in the tombs of the early Egyptians, Greek

and Etruscans (Blake, 1976). After the invention of paper, the nuns during the Renaissance created decorative reliquaries since papers are less expensive than silver and gold. The use of paper was more widespread during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as the ladies of these eras decorated baskets, tea caddies, screens, and furniture (Johnston, 1995). Additionally, quilling became popular in the United States when the country was colonised, but its popularity seems to have declined in the late eighteenth century when other arts and hobbies like sewing, drawing and jewellery design began to take place (Cobb, 2022).



Figure 2: Quilled kufi rumi

Quilling in Modern Times

Today, quilling has made a major come back as paper crafts grow in popularity. This is mainly due to the prevalent of social media where arts can be shared worldwide. Modern quilled designs are normally combined with other paper craft techniques to make beautiful embellishments for cards, frames, boxes or even jewellery. Although it requires certain techniques, quilling is easy to do. With only basic tools, papers and glues, various works of art can be created. Due to its simplicity, quilling is suitable for any age

groups and genders. The artworks of quilling can also be commercialised and turn out to be a wellspring of salary.

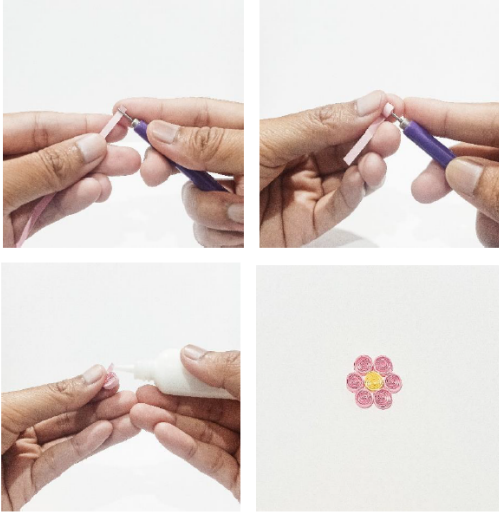


Figure 3: Making a simple flower using loose coils

Artist like Yulia Brodskaya, a London-based graphic designer is today's most well-known and renowned quiller. She has transformed conventional graphic designs into three-dimensional paper artworks with quilling. Yulia brings her love for paper crafts and experience in graphic design together as if she is drawing with papers. She has made quilling looks more attractive and modern as compared to the traditional quilling, which uses various basic shapes. Yulia incorporates bright colours and small details in her paper artwork. Her innovative paper illustrations ranging from paper-and-typographic to fine arts, small to large artworks, which have helped her build an impressive list of clients worldwide.



Figure 4: Yulia Brodskaya – Gibco 50
Figure 5: Yulia Brodskaya – Holi

Source: artyulia.co.uk

The Importance of Quilling

Quilling is one of the remarkable and important art forms one can venture in. With just a few paper strips, a glue, and a quilling tool, one can create decorative arts at anytime and anywhere without having to spend a lot of money. It can be an exciting hobby that serves different benefits to different individuals in the art world.

Enhance motor skills

Besides being one's inexpensive hobby, quilling can enhance our motor skills since it involves our eye and hand coordination. This is evident when quilling was used to develop the senior pre-schoolers' fine motor skills in a kindergarten in the Ust-Aldan district, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) (Ammasova & Nikolaeva, 2022). Similarly, in Malaysia, quilling is incorporated in the Standard 4 art class syllabus for the Mosaic Technique or better known as Teknik Mozek (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2018). In this lesson, students need to quill colourful paper strips to decorate a cupcake. This can also stimulate their brain since they need to arrange and paste the quilled shapes made on the cupcake. Additionally, it will make the school-going children busy with this activity as compared to playing with their phones or video games as quilling will make them occupied and attentive (Cobb, 2022). This corresponds to Baker (2016, p.2), in which she stated that "The process of quilling is closely tied with mindfulness, the meditative state of paying attention to the present".



Figure 5:
Miniature cameras



Figure 6:
Miniature bakery

Stimulate creativity

Like many other types of arts, quilling is also one of the ways to increase our creativity. This is because, many art pieces can be created with the quilling technique. We can express ourselves and show how creative we can be with papers. This is apparent as quilling is integrated in making artworks in art classes for the 7th grade students of junior high school 1 Bae Kudus (Pawekas, Syafii & Murtiyoso, 2019) and the 8th grade students of state junior high school 2 Majauleng Kabupaten Wajo District, Indonesia (Khaerunnisa, Saleh & Arifin, 2018), where the students created various animal and flower motifs, besides greeting cards, decorative nameplate, souvenirs of the area or tourist attractions, decorative photo frames and decorations on calendars of various sizes.



Figure 8: Quilled paper graphic - World Hijab Day

Effective Stress Reliever

Quilling is both meditative and therapeutic (Cobb, 2022). This low-cost craft helps us to relieve tension and emotional stress as rolling paper strips and designing art pieces can make us pay our attention to it, thus making us meditate and relax. This can soothe the mind and promote serenity (Lipsey, 2021). Baker

(2016) also added that quilling is relaxing as we are gladly engaged in and focus on the process rather than the final product. The ability to concentrate on quilling is one of the ways to relax and take a break from our hectic lives and also technological devices. When the artworks are about to be completed, we will feel happy and contented, thus, help us relieve our stress.

Generate income

Since quilling can be used to create various items, namely jewellerys, bookmarks, portraits, miniatures, as well as decorations for cards, posters, boxes, and frames, we can turn our interest or hobby in quilling into a part-time or full-time business (Cobb, 2022). Single mothers, especially, can take this opportunity to learn about quilling and turn their ideas, as well as their creativity and use them as their means of support or a full-fledged occupation when they commercialise their work.

Recycling

As artists or crafters, we may have stored a lot of paper scraps or leftovers from our old art projects, which may be useful in the future (Lipsey, 2021). The best thing about quilling is that, not only we can use all those paper scraps or leftovers to make attractive paper designs, we can also use old newspapers and magazines to create beautiful quilled art or craft projects. This will help to promote the recycling practice and sustainability, simultaneously reduce more papers from being thrown into landfills.



Figure 9: Quilled typography

Conclusion

Quilling, like many other types of arts, has its own attractions. It has the ability to make viewers see things through the eyes of an artist. One can create beautiful, decorative paper crafts and embellishments for their art projects by simply rolling paper strips and attach them together. Not only it can be a good new hobby to take up, quilling can also be a new form of media in the art making where the artists and crafters can boost their creativity level and express themselves.

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