



## Altered Penny Carpets

### (art + history)

In the 1800s, many homes were decorated with something called a “Penny Carpet” or “Penny Rug”. More often a table cover than an actual rug, they were made from stitched-together scraps of fabric cut into circles by tracing around a penny. Individual cells of fabric “patches” were hooked together to make a larger piece.

In this lesson plan, students follow the basic idea of making a “Penny Carpet,” but alter it in many ways to make it a piece of art. Instead of using scrap fabric, they will design a patch by making a printing plate out of flexible material and printing on muslin with textile colors.

Students may each make a single piece, or stitch multiple pieces together, or combine the pieces made by all the students in the class as a group project.

### Grade Levels 3-12

*Note: instructions and materials are based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.*

### Preparation

1. Cut muslin into 6" x 10" pieces, one per student.
2. Collect small flexible shallow plastic containers such as frozen dinner trays.

### Materials

[Blickrylic® Gel Medium](#), 1/2 gallon (00711-1018); share one across class

[Jacquard® Textile Colors](#), assorted colors, 8-oz bottles, (01247-1009); share eight across class

[Yasutomo® Fabricmate Superfine Markers](#), assorted colors and sets, (01202-); share 12-24 across class

[Dynasty® Ruby Synthetic Brush Canister](#), 72-piece assortment (05198-0729); share one set across class

[Color Shaper™ Kids Paint Set](#), 5 tools (04935-0601); share one set across class

[Unbleached Muslin](#), 38" x 1-yd, (63104-1338); share two yards across class

[Snippy® Scissors](#), 12-pack pointed, (57040-2009); need one per student

[Creativity Street® Embroidery Floss](#), assorted 24-skeins, (63100-1009); share one set across class

[Acrylic Felt](#), 100-piece assortment, 9" x 12" (63201-1003); share one package across class

Embroidery needles

### Optional Materials:

[Speedball® Linoleum Cutter Handles](#) (40201-7030); need one per student

[Speedball® Linoleum Cutters](#), assorted style blades (40203-)

[Inovart® Printfoam for Block Printing](#), 9" x 12" package of 12 (40403-1003); 1/4 sheet per student



Exam ples of  
Gel plates

### Process

1. Mold assorted shapes of printing plates by pouring liquid gel medium into flexible, shallow plastic containers. Fill with 1/2" to 3/4" of medium and allow to dry for 24 hours. Remove from the mold.
2. Use scissors or linoleum cutters to cut into the gel, create texture and remove sections of the plate. Some plates may dry with bubbles or other interesting textures. Both sides can be used. If doing a series of Penny Patches to put together, use both sides of the gel for a variety of textures with the same shape.
3. Brush Jacquard Fabric Paint on the gel plate. Use Color Shapers to remove paint and define patterns. While paint is still wet, continue to step #5.
4. Place a piece of muslin over the painted gel and press with fingers print. There will be negative space where carved areas and color shapers have removed paint. These areas may be painted with fabric markers or left white. Allow to dry and cut the print out with scissors. No heat-setting is required.
5. Place the print onto a piece of felt, trace 1/4" around the shape with a pencil and cut. Place this felt shape onto another color of felt, repeat the 1/4" outline, and cut.
6. Use colored embroidery thread to stitch pieces together. Sew the muslin onto one piece of felt, then both onto the second piece of felt. One print plus two layers of felt equals one "Penny Patch". Repeat steps 3-6 to make multiples.

7. Assemble the individual patches together in one large piece by stitching the edges together where they touch. Leave as is or glue the piece onto a backing board or heavy felt for support.

### Options

1. Make this project without making a gel plate. Substitute with stamps, block printing materials, or simply paint designs on pieces of fabric.
2. Vary the shape and size of the patches.
3. Instead of felt, use recycled denim, khaki or other heavy fabrics.

### 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 experiences 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 cultures

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

**9-12** Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places.