**Paper Casting in Four Easy Steps by Lisa Leong-Tsang**

Traditionally, cotton linters or similarly prepared paper pulp has been used to cast into molds but we have simplified this method by using moistened folded toilet paper or paper towels to facilitate the technique, eliminating the use of a blender. Pulp is the fibrous substance created by mixing macerated cellulose with water. Charmin TP works best but you can also use other TP brands and paper towels but you will see minor cracks and the paper texture since the coarser fibers do not pick up the delicate texture from your molds as well.

1. Make sure your molds are clean. Fold your TP square to fit your mold and use a flat brush dipped into water, pressing the paper into the mold. This first layer should be pressed hard to minimize voids, picking up the details of your design. Refold another square and repeat until you have about 8-12 layers. Fold the edges into the mold.
2. Use a dry towel and press hard to extract as much moisture as possible. Do this several times with a dry section of your towel. If all moisture has been removed, TP pulp will look dryer and be lighter in color.
3. Use a pointed stylus to loosen an edge and check for moisture. If enough moisture has been extracted, you can knock the almost dry pulp shape from the mold. If above method does not work, try peeling pulp shape from the loosened edge of form. If you still have trouble, your pulp is too wet. Use a dry sponge or cloth to extract additional moisture and repeat “release” process.
4. Allow to dry completely. You can speed the process in an oven with low heat. Once dry, you can strengthen your paper casting by filling the back with fiber paste or a comparable product. You can also brush a layer of acrylic matte medium over the surface or paint your finished paper cast with watercolors or acrylic paints. Spray varnish can also be used but I try to avoid the aerosols. This will make the final product more durable and waterproof.

These dimensional shapes can be affixed to handmade cards, gift tags, made into hanging ornaments, pins, package decorations, party favors, collage, the possibilities are endless. Use hot glue to attach cast paper shape to cards, ribbon or packages. 