

## Embossing and Painting on Black Paper

*Is your embossing powder gathering dust?  
Is your black cardstock unused, tucked away  
in a dark corner?*

*Is that snow-white pigment-ink pad giving  
you the cold shoulder?*

*Are you looking for an excuse to buy a few  
Copics or other alcohol-based inks?*

Then Painted Embossing on Black is just the four-pronged solution you need.

Barbara Gibbons says she first saw this technique demonstrated by Stamp A Mania at the Mesa Stamp Convention.

“The demonstrator was coloring with Spectrum Noir markers. She assured me the embossing powder would not damage the marker tips. I colored most of this artwork directly with my Copics. While a couple of them got white

spots on the tips, it does not seem to have hurt them any.”

The vibrant, eye-popping results are dramatic for such an easy technique: Stamp, emboss, paint. General instructions for Barb’s artwork are given first, but please be sure to read the helpful tips that follow.

### General instructions:

- 1) Cut black matte-finish cardstock to desired size.
- 2) Sweep over cardstock with anti-static bag, dryer sheet, or warm the cardstock with heat tool. This helps prevent stray specks of embossing powder (EP) from sticking.
- 3) Stamp chosen design using white pigment ink. Images with lots of solid areas will give you plenty of surface area to “paint” with the alcohol inks.
- 4) Pour white, opaque EP over the inked image. Tip excess back into the bottle. Turn over cardstock, and flick the

back with your finger to remove any loose particles. Check the front again. Remove any stray powder particles with a small paintbrush.

5) Heat the EP with a heat tool until evenly shiny. Let cool.

6) Paint the embossed areas with Copics, Spectrum Noir, Adirondack, or any alcohol-based inks. If you don’t want to place marker tips directly on the EP, put a few drops of refill ink on a plastic lid and apply with Q-tips, Fantastix, and/or paint brushes.

7) Begin coloring the lightest areas. Shade and add depth by adding medium and darker tones. It really is not hard to stay on fine lines since



**BEE FRIENDS** / Barbara Gibbons

(Stamp credits: Bee hives: I Love Rubber Stamps; flowers—Current Clear Stamps; greeting—Stampin’ Up!, bees—unknown.)

the embossing is raised. Even if your paint tool slips, small errors won't show on black cardstock.

8) If the stamped image has lots of open areas, those spaces can be colored with pastels, chalks, or Prismacolor pencils. It's best to paint the lines first, however.

9) Optional: Spray finished piece with Krylon Clear Gloss acrylic spray. (Barb says, "I spray everything.")

10) Mount your finished piece on layers of contrasting or complimentary cardstock to display your visually striking work of art.

## About alcohol-based inks

Copics and Spectrum Noir markers, their refill inks, and the Adirondack alcohol-based inks that come in re-inker bottles (often used for the "polished stone" technique), may all be used for this technique. They all work on many non-porous surfaces, which is essentially what embossing powder is once it's been heat-melted.

If using Adirondack alcohol inks, dark colors can be diluted with rubbing alcohol. Barb uses the 91% which is available in pharmacies. It's good for cleaning up any spills—and hands—too. Hand sanitizers, which are around 63% alcohol, also work.

"The common wisdom is you shouldn't use Copics with embossed images because the ink 'melts' the powder and clogs the tips," Barb says. "When I taught this to my stamping class, we used alcohol refill inks applied with Q-tips, Fantastix, and paint brushes. All worked fine, but since cotton swabs sometimes have loose fibers that may smear ink, you can remove about half the cotton, and twist

### Make your own anti-static bag

Mix together a teaspoon of baking soda, and a teaspoon of talcum powder. Place inside a square of light fabric (or a baby sock.) Tie, stitch, or rubber band the ends together. Gently rub the bag over cardstock before stamping. Any residue can be wiped off with a soft rag or tissue after embossing is complete.



### DAWN AT THE POND / Barbara Gibbons

*(Stamp credits: Water lily—Embossing Arts [I Brake for Stamps]; dragonfly on right side of weed—Beeswax; reeds—Stampscapes; top dragonfly—unknown.)*

the remainder tightly around the end. The Fantastix Coloring Tools by Imagine Crafts/Tsukineko also work well and come with brush and bullet points.

"Just put a few drops of refill ink on a piece of plastic—like a small container lid. Don't worry about making your work soggy. Swabs will just be damp when applied—plus alcohol-based inks dry quickly."

## About embossing powders and cardstock

Barb used Stamp A Mania's Glacier White and Crystal White embossing powders in these examples. Any opaque white EP would probably work just as well. She also likes to use pigment white ink for the stamping itself. It's easy to see on black, and it still shows white if a bit of embossing powder fails to stick.

Generally speaking, any color pigment or slow-drying ink can be used for stamping, but the results won't be as vivid as with white pigment ink. Also, if you select a non-solid image, "detail" EP has finer powder, and will give cleaner lines.

Glossy cardstock may be used, but heated

EP sticks better to matte cardstock, and is less likely to chip off. EP also tends to static-cling to glossy more readily than matte.

### Tips for using embossing powder

❖ All EP is not created equal. Different powders melt at different temperatures. Test first with the same cardstock and ink you plan to use.

❖ Open the EP jar, and have it ready before inking the stamp.

❖ Work over a clean piece of paper so you can return the unused powder to the jar.

❖ After pouring on the EP and dumping off the excess, check that all inked areas have powder on them. If any areas look thinly covered, repeat the process.

❖ Place the cardstock on a heat-resistant surface, such as a ceramic tile, silicone sheet, foil-covered piece of Masonite, or cardboard. This allows the heat to penetrate the cardstock and heat from underneath as well as the top. Hold it down with a craft stick, chopstick, or something similar, to keep from burning your fingers.

❖ Slant the heat tool at a 45-degree angle to the cardstock, and keep it moving. Avoid touching the melting powder or it will smear.

❖ When the powder melts, it turns shiny. When it looks shiny all over, shut off the heat tool. Pick up the piece, tilt it into the light, and look for any dull, unmelted areas. Heat those areas again if needed. As soon as it's shiny, it's done.

❖ If any areas were missed by the ink or powder, use a brush or Fantastix to apply ink there, re-dust with EP and reheat that portion.



Barbara Gibbons currently lives in Brenda, Arizona, but she and her husband will soon be moving to Pahrump, Nevada. "We bought into an RV park co-op, and that will become our home base. I would love to hear from any Southern Nevada stampers! My email address is camperstamperbarb@yahoo.com."



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*Barbara Blanks often has a bee up her belfry. She mixes other metaphors at [www.barbara-blanks.com](http://www.barbara-blanks.com).*