

EMBOSSING

My wonderful friend Dorothy Holness has given me permission to adapt this version from her booklet Embossing – Step by Step, in this section. I want to give you the best possible tutoring in this probably the most important process in parchment crafting. So I thank you Dorothy, for your friendship, permission and for sharing your wonderful talent in our art form. All the art work in this section is Dorothy's own, but please excuse any grey quality, as the images have been scanned to insert here.

Please have patience, embossing is not something that can be rushed, so take your time, go slowly and gently and you will have great results!

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Parchment paper has special properties and when embossed, by applying pressure to the paper, gives us all shades of grey through to white. We can produce what is, in effect, a monochrome picture but using parchment paper and tools instead of colouring mediums. As the design is raised by the use of the tools it also gives shape and depth to make it look almost three dimensional.

Tracing for the designs can be done with white ink or pencil. Pencil is better because it can be erased after and you don't want the outlines to show as it will diminish the 3D effect, and inevitably any wobbles with ink may spoil your work. Never emboss the outlines unless they are specific to the pattern. Try to avoid gel pens for tracing when embossing, as they are not fine enough to give you a good image.

When tracing, leave out things like the connecting lines, veins on leaves, stamens etc. You can add these later with a PCA ®Scriber or Uni tool.

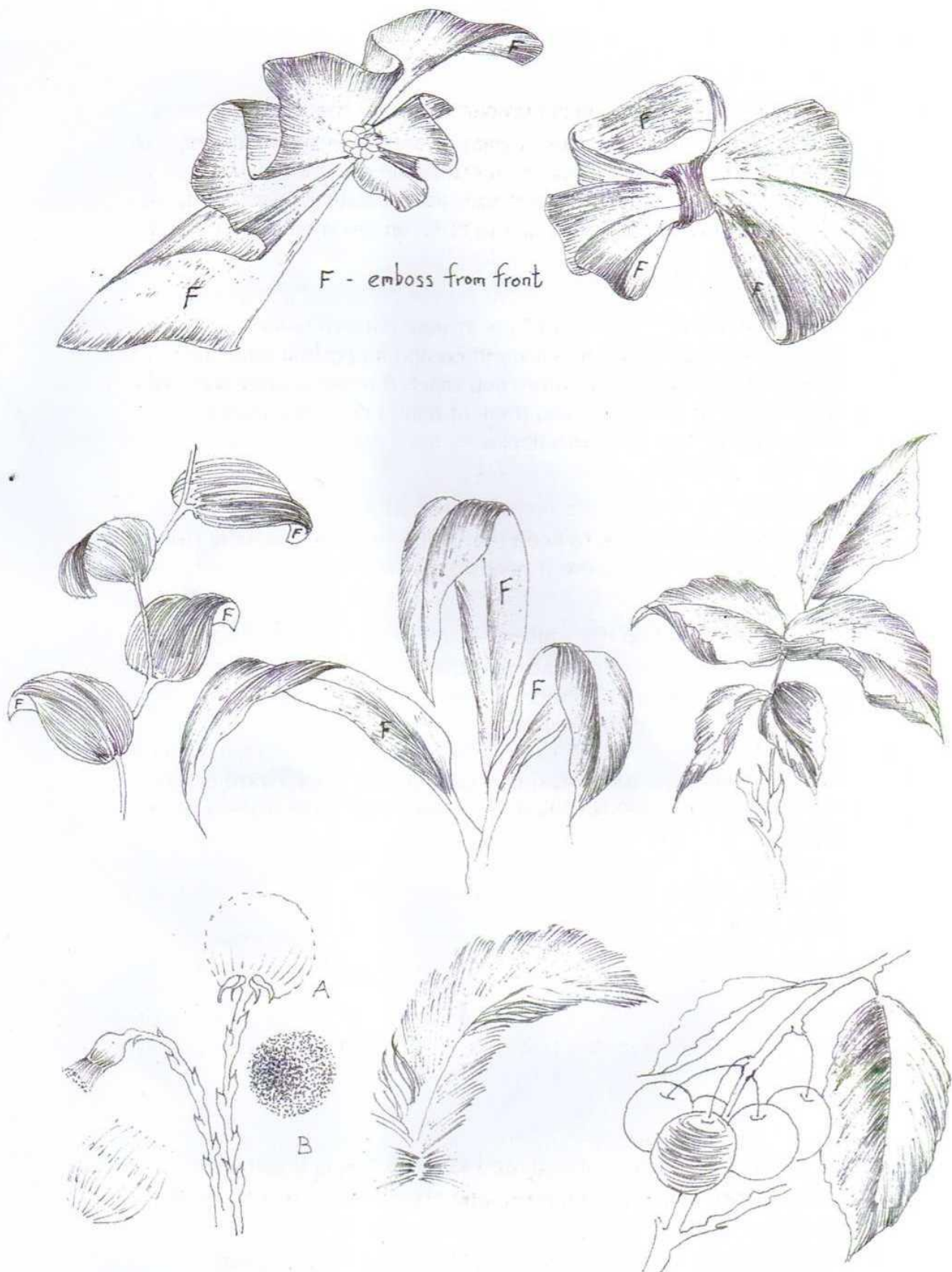
Embossing is done on a special mat. A flat rubber mat is preferable, because it has a little more resistance and helps to allow a gradual build up of shades.

**Hint:** allow embossing to rest, say for an hour or two, between each layer, because the paper will relax and shrinks back slightly. Working too quickly can often result in a bubbling which is not what you want.

PCA® have, as already discussed under the "Materials" section, both ball tools and shader tools in various sizes: the larger the tool, the softer the result; the smaller the tool, the sharper and whiter the result. You will eventually need all the sizes to become more proficient.

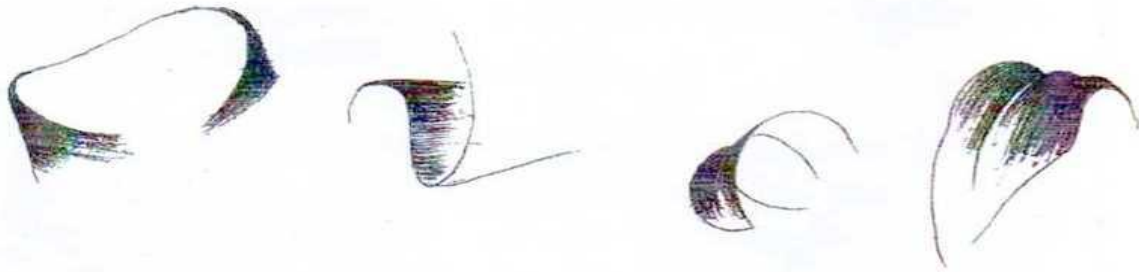
Shaping, in particular with petals and fabric, can be given by embossing from both back and front, whereas most embossing is done from the back of the work. If you think of a petal as a spoon shape, and if it scoops upwards then the inside of the scoop should be embossed from the front to show it as concave.

**Hint:** when embossing from the front cover the paper with a small piece of thin polythene to avoid "polishing" the paper.



These patterns for the motifs on the following pages are shaded just to give you an idea of how to start your embossing and the direction of the strokes.

Above are a few images to show you examples of when you should emboss from the front.



The images here show you how working in stages, slowly and gently can give lovely results. Rub the back of your paper with a dry tumble dryer sheet first. Start off using a very soft touch with the PCA® Mega ball tool or Soft Shader you have, this will warm up the paper and start to stretch the fibres. Don't worry that at this stage you haven't got instant results, that won't happen! Your first layer will be very light and may just be barely visible; this is normal. Remember that the un-embossed areas are showing the shade and the embossed areas are your light. It is often as important what you don't emboss, as much as what you do!

Look very carefully at the pattern or image you are copying before you start and decide where your light and shade are going to be needed. Remember also that your strokes need to be light, think of striking a match, and flick away at the end of the stroke. Some people flick towards themselves and others away. Personally I do both, depending on what is required. You will find what way is more comfortable and controllable for you.

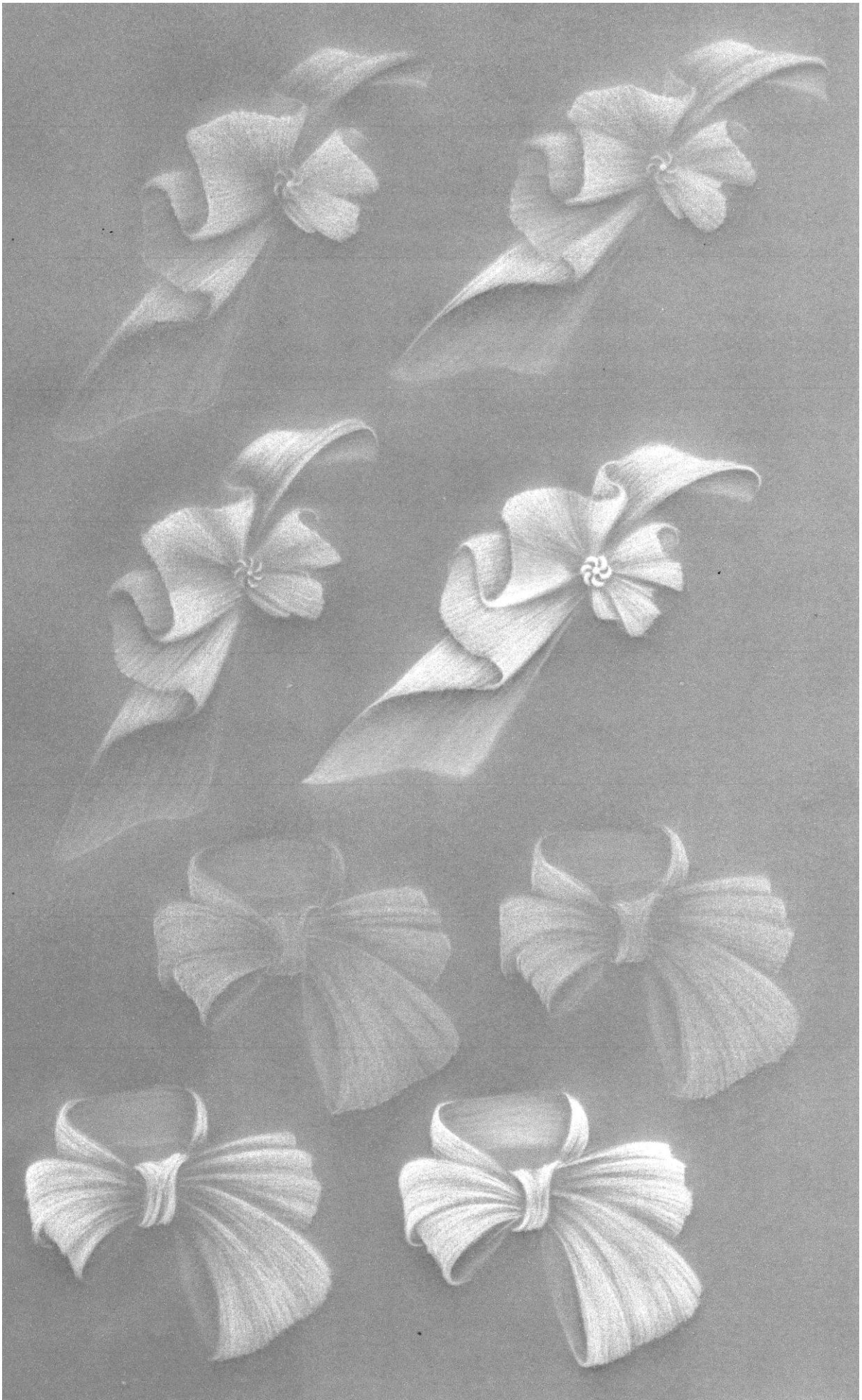
Your second layer should be with the same tool, but with a little more pressure this time.

**HINT:** Remember that you can always add more whiteness but you can't take it away! Always keep in mind where your light and shade should be; more pressure = lighter. As you slowly build up the whiteness, move down in tool size, from mega, to large, to medium, to small and for the very fine detail, the micro and even the scribe. The same thing applies when using the shader tools. The smallest tools will be used to bring out any fine detail like curves, but again try to not leave any harsh lines, by remembering that flicking movement at the end of each stroke.

**HINT:** If you cannot imagine where your light and shade needs to go, photocopy another pattern or image, and make sure it is in black and white, with grey shades (easily manipulated within your print dialogue) then using a pencil, trace out your shaded areas so you can see it better. If you are more comfortable, you could trace out the lighter areas instead, whichever is easier you. Just don't get them mixed up.

**HINT:** remember to wipe a "bounce" dry tumble drier sheet over your paper before you start to emboss, it makes life so much easier and makes your tools glide over the paper.

On the next page you will find stage by stage - 4 each of two designs, to show you how gradual your work should be in the build up. Note how where there is shade, there is no embossing at all and where it is whiter is where the light hits the design.





The leaf patterns above are done in the stages as previously discussed: following A, B, C and D to show how the layers are built up. Most leaves can be given their shape by working from the centre vein outwards, on one side and from the outer edge inwards on the opposite side. Look at the leaves, you will see that most of them have the central vein

indented at the front and protruding on the back, therefore emboss the central vein from the front. Small veins can be embossed from the back. Other types of leaves have veins down their length. Again, use the finest tools to emphasise where a leaf turns. The same applies to bows and folds in fabric.

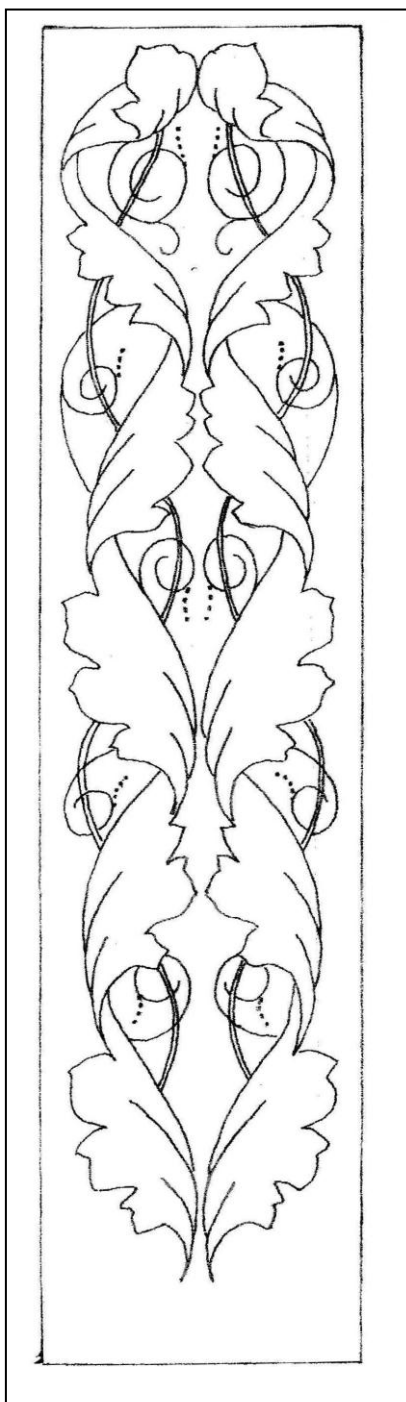


The Coltsfoot “clock” at the top is very lightly outlined with white pencil and using a large shader or large ball tool, emboss from the back, working from the base to the top and

following the curves at the sides. Do it once again with the same tool, this time with a little more pressure. The “clock” is then stippled. This is a process worked from the back using either the PCA® Scriber on a piece of hard cardboard or the PCA® Uni, on a piece of sandpaper, with a light tapping motion, as evenly as you can manage to get the effect of a spray. The little fine hair like protrusions (extreme right image) at the base of the “clock” are put in with the Uni tool, using very light flicking movements from the base to about half way up the shape.

The feather in the second line is softly embossed, with a gradual build up, and then a few tiny fronds picked out using very light strokes and flicks with the Scriber or Uni.

The cherries in the third line are embossed from side to side, putting a little more pressure in the centre where the light hits them.



## SUBMISSIONS

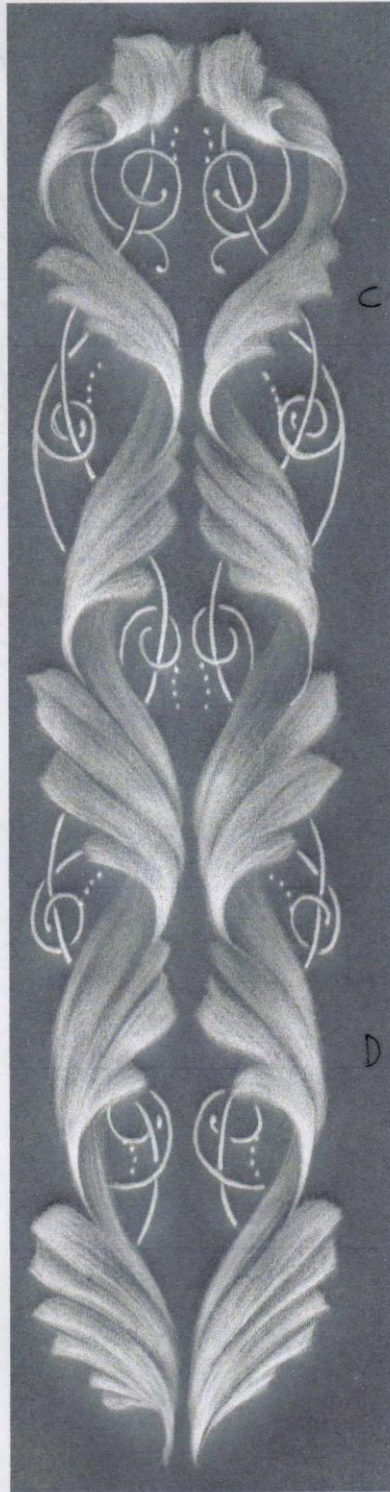
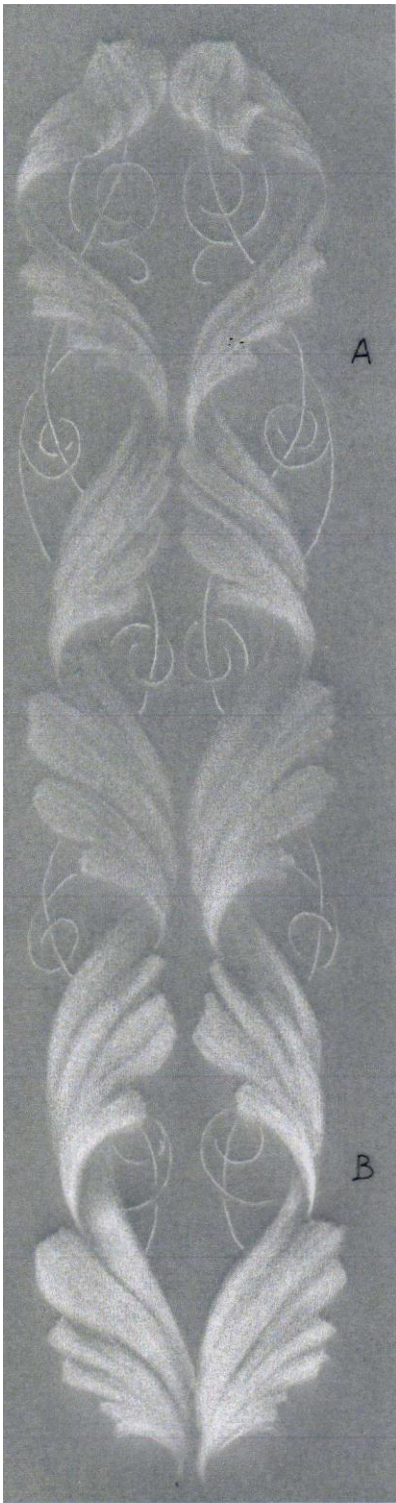
**You can now choose to submit any 3 of the following seven patterns as Submissions, plus there are two compulsory at the end (marked “compulsory”), so in this section you will be submitting FIVE pieces for marking and towards your overall marks. You may present your work in any way you wish, and although this will make it look better, it won’t be taken into consideration in the overall marks given**

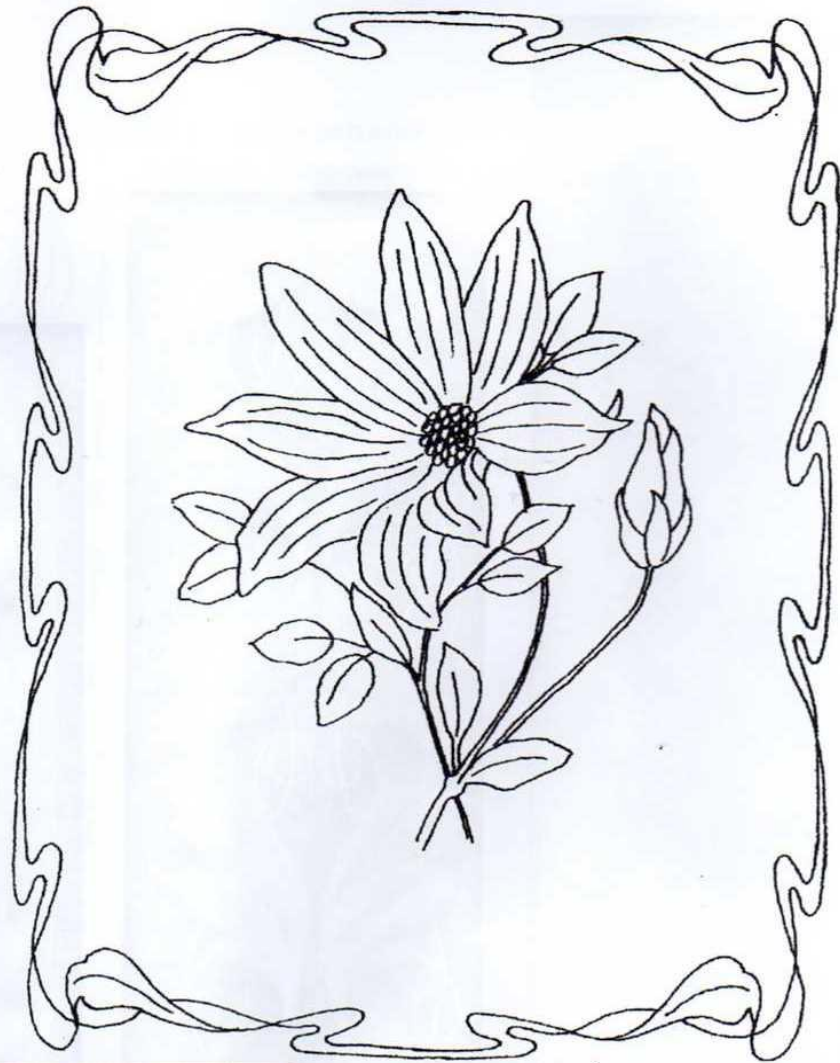
Practice until you are happy that you have as good a piece as possible in comparison with the final piece on the next page.

This pattern on the left is shown below in the example, in the stages of build up, A-D with the finished one mounted.

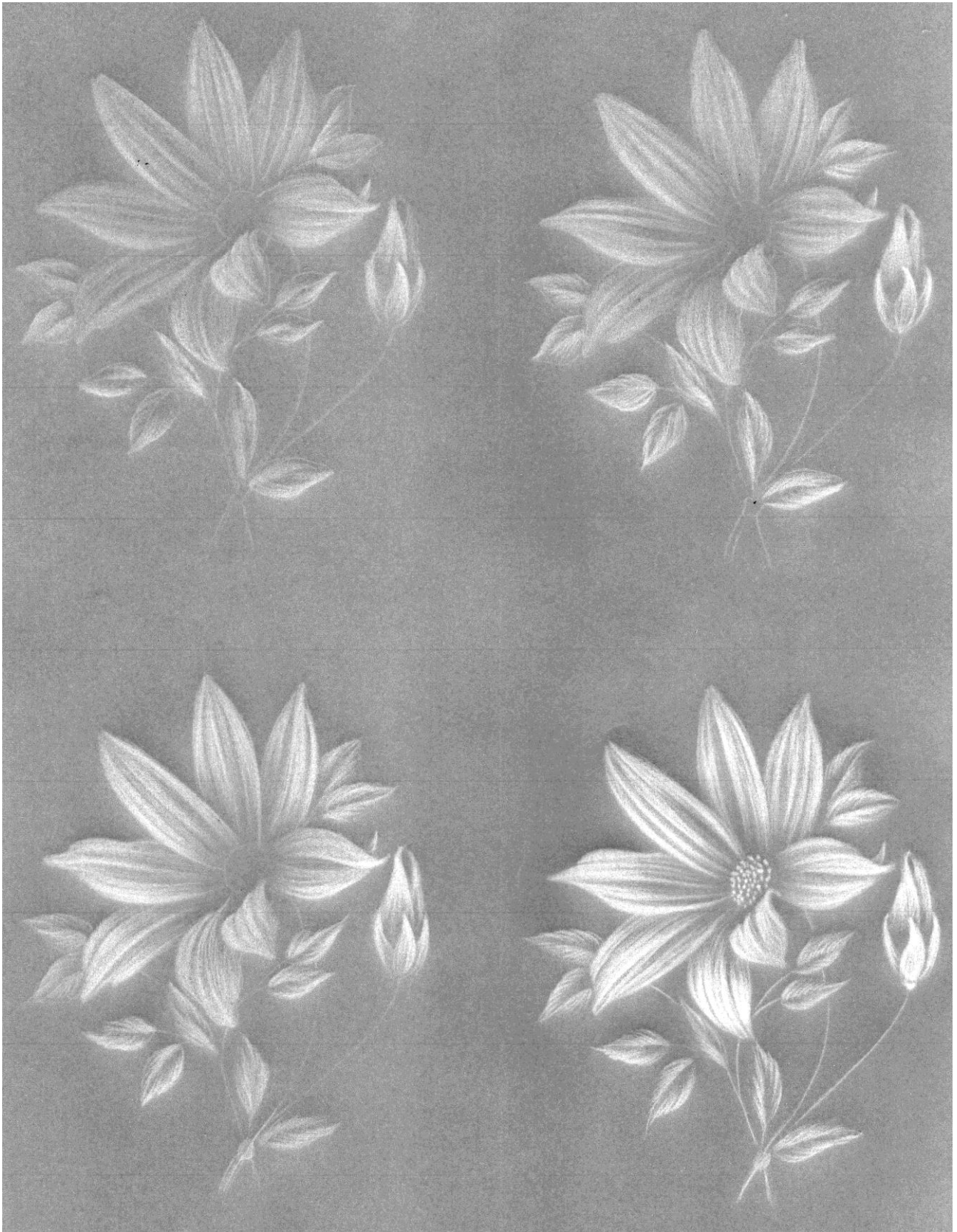
**Don’t forget to “bounce” your paper before starting to parch.**

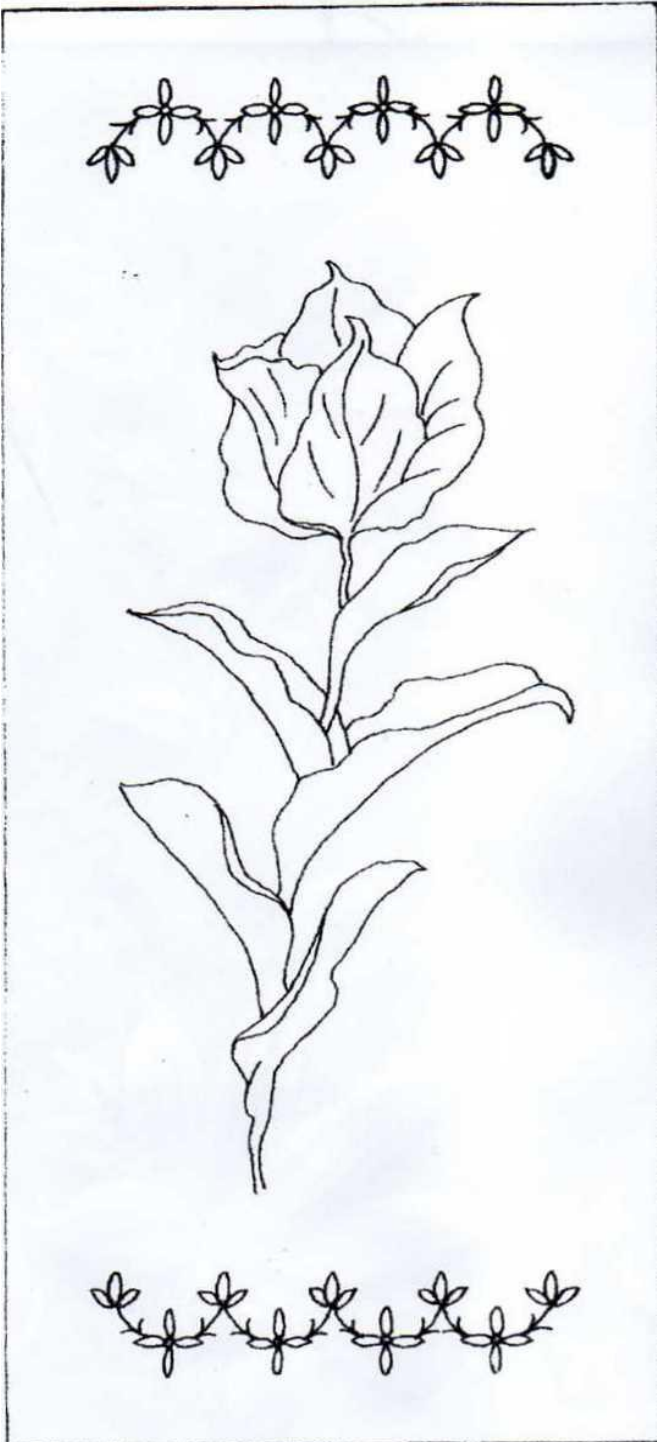
Again start the embossing very softly and gently to stretch and warm the paper. Think about where the shadows should be and leave them un-embossed or very lightly embossed as is required. Then think about where the lightest areas need to be highlighted, by using the PCA® Micro Ball tool, or the PCA® Scriber to sharpen up the details, such as the tips of the leave and the turn overs on petals.





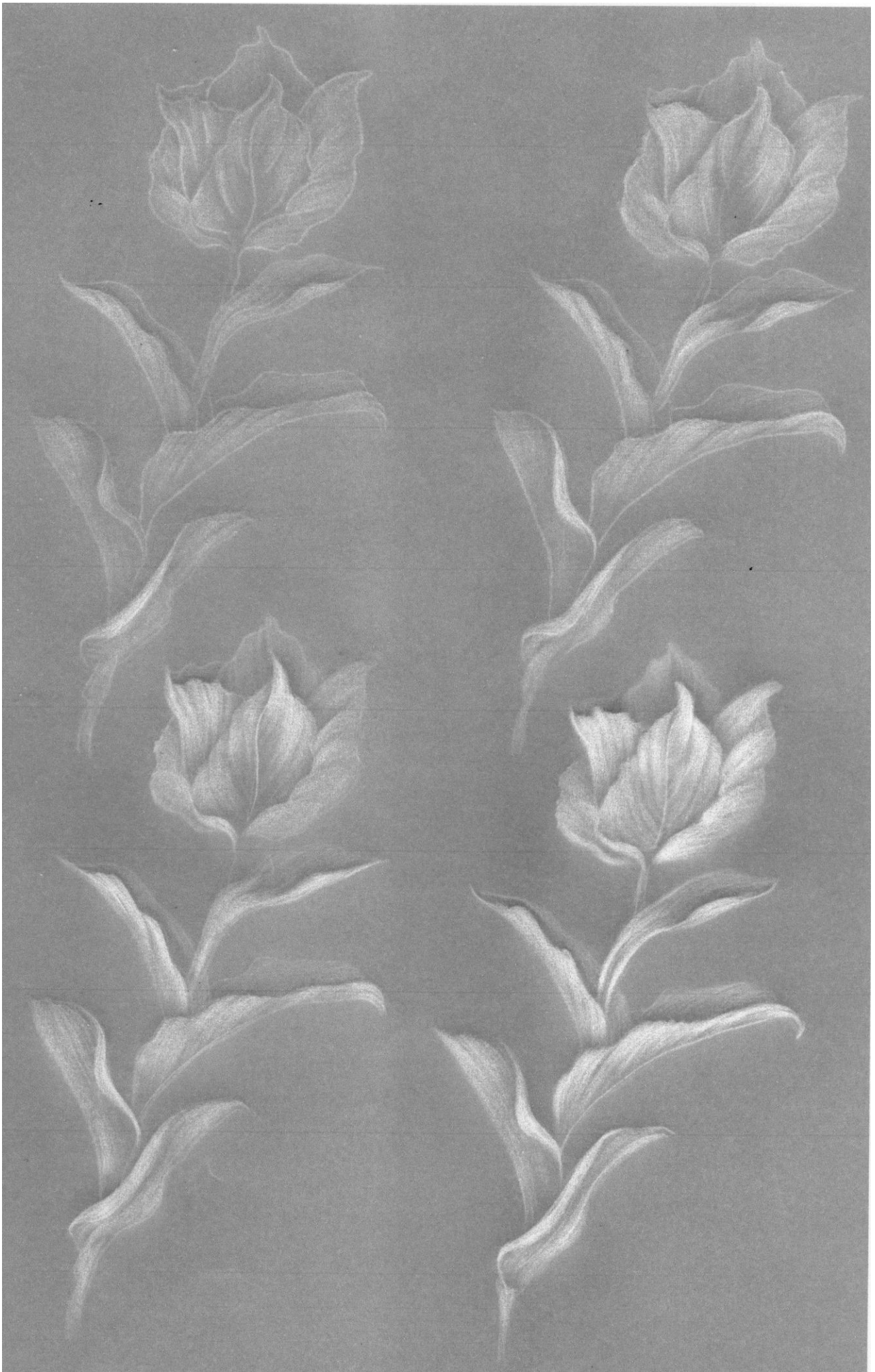
**SUBMISSION 2:**

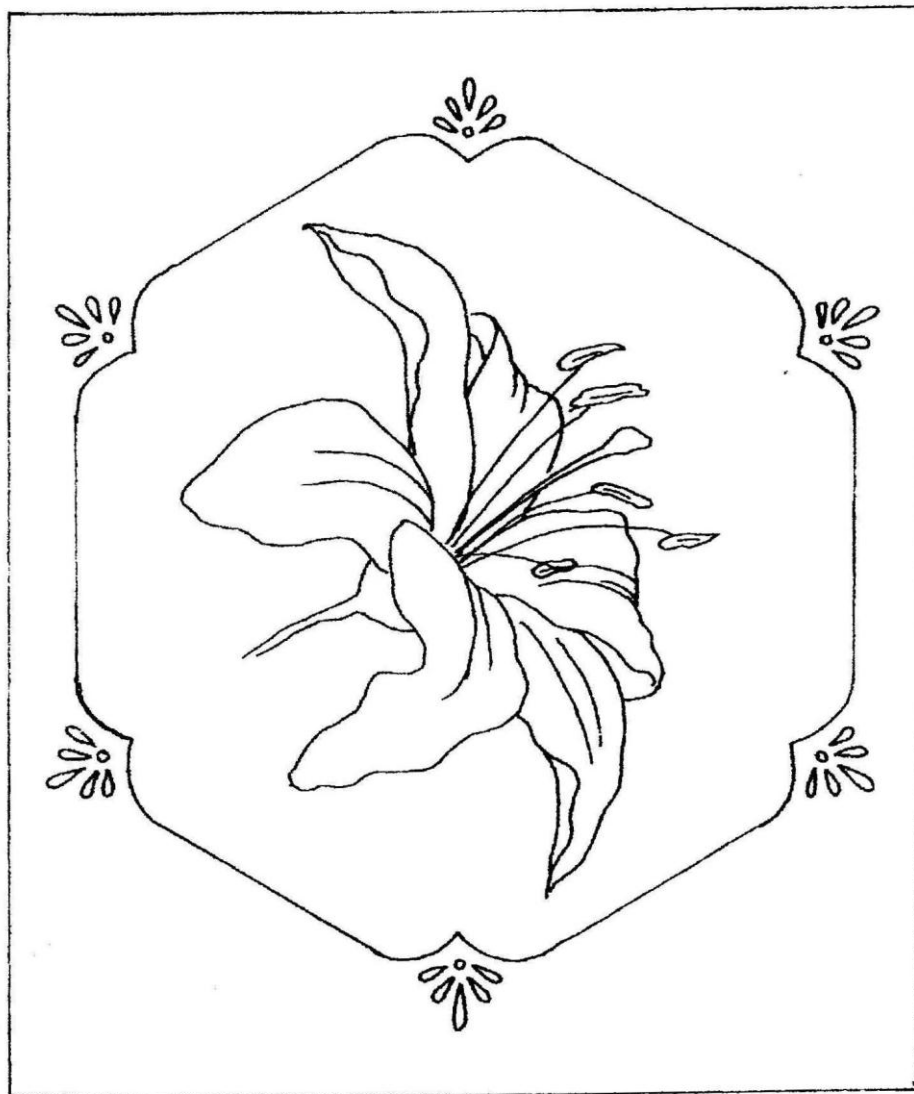




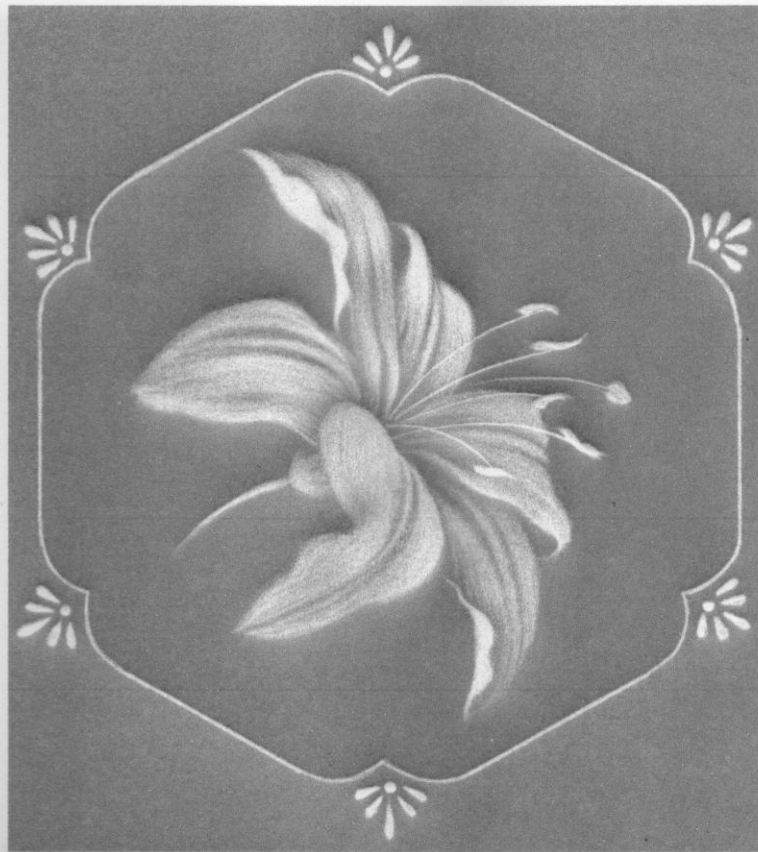
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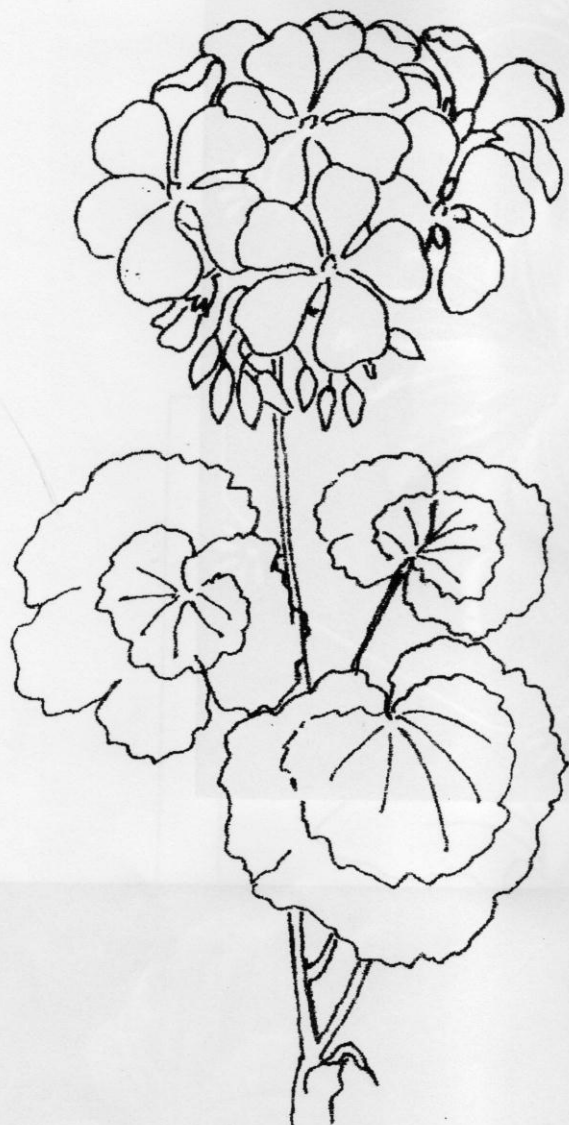




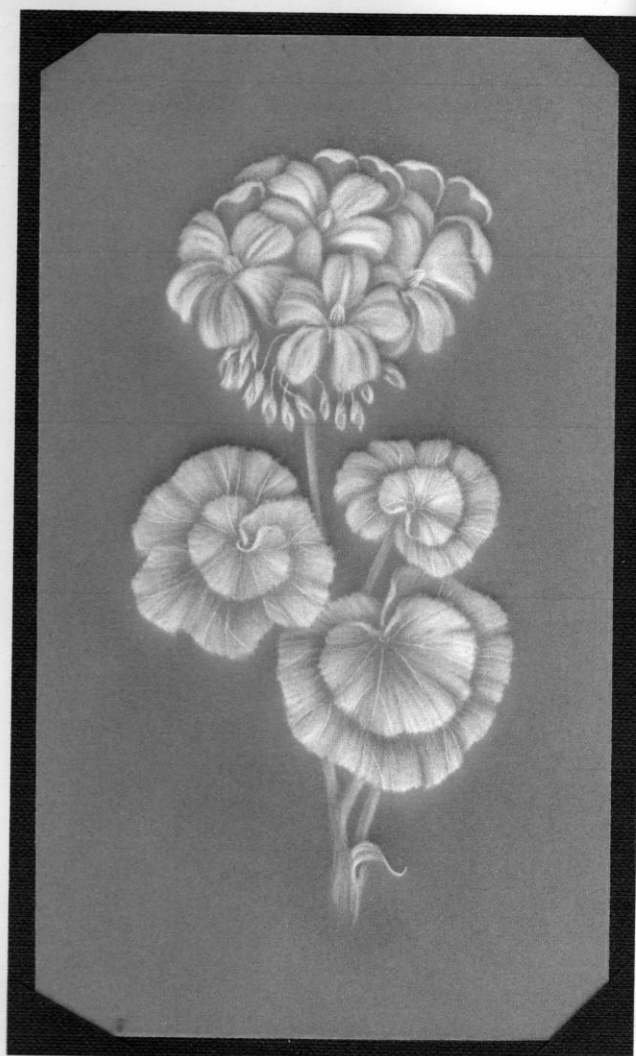


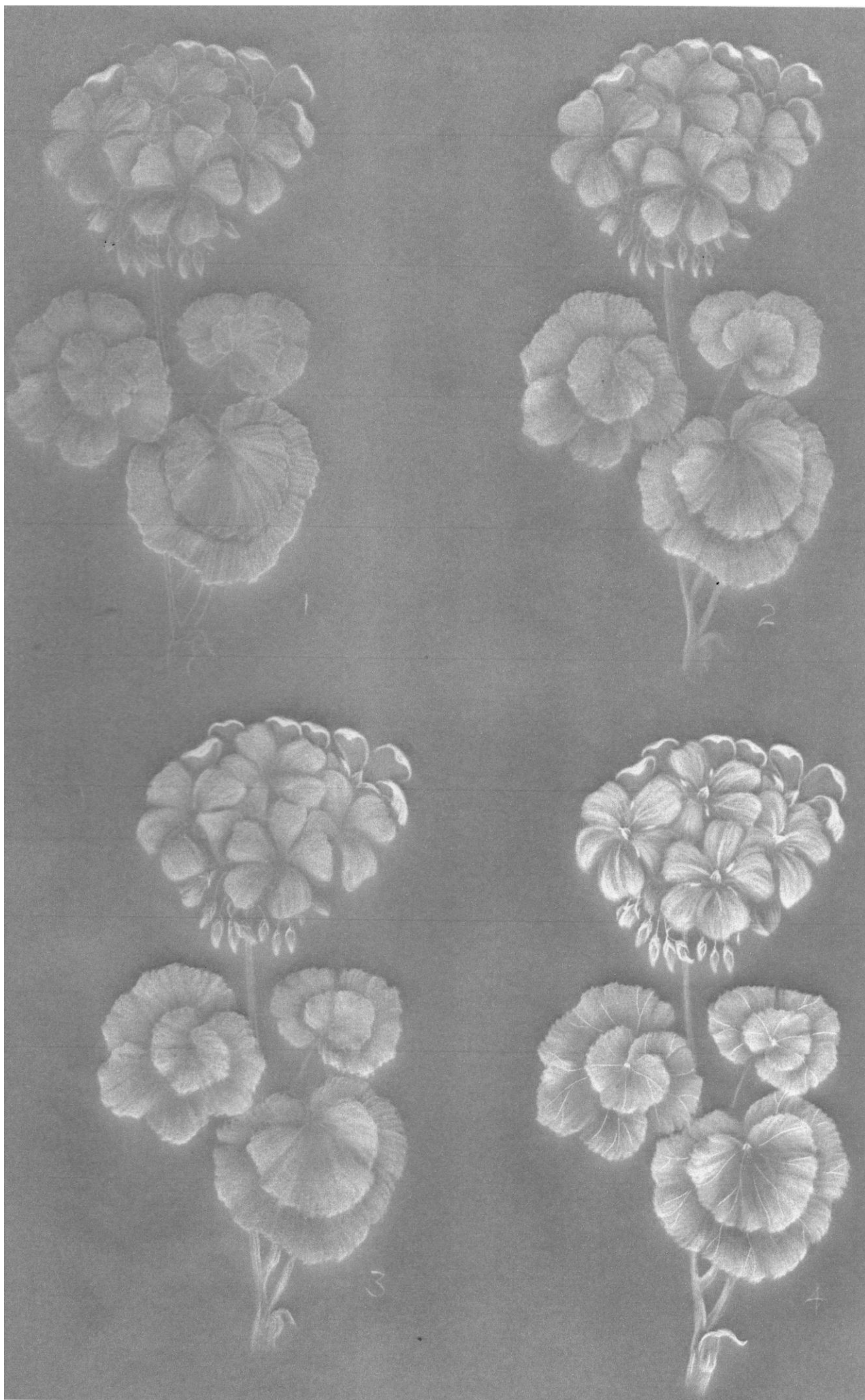
**SUBMISSION 4**





**SUBMISSION 5**

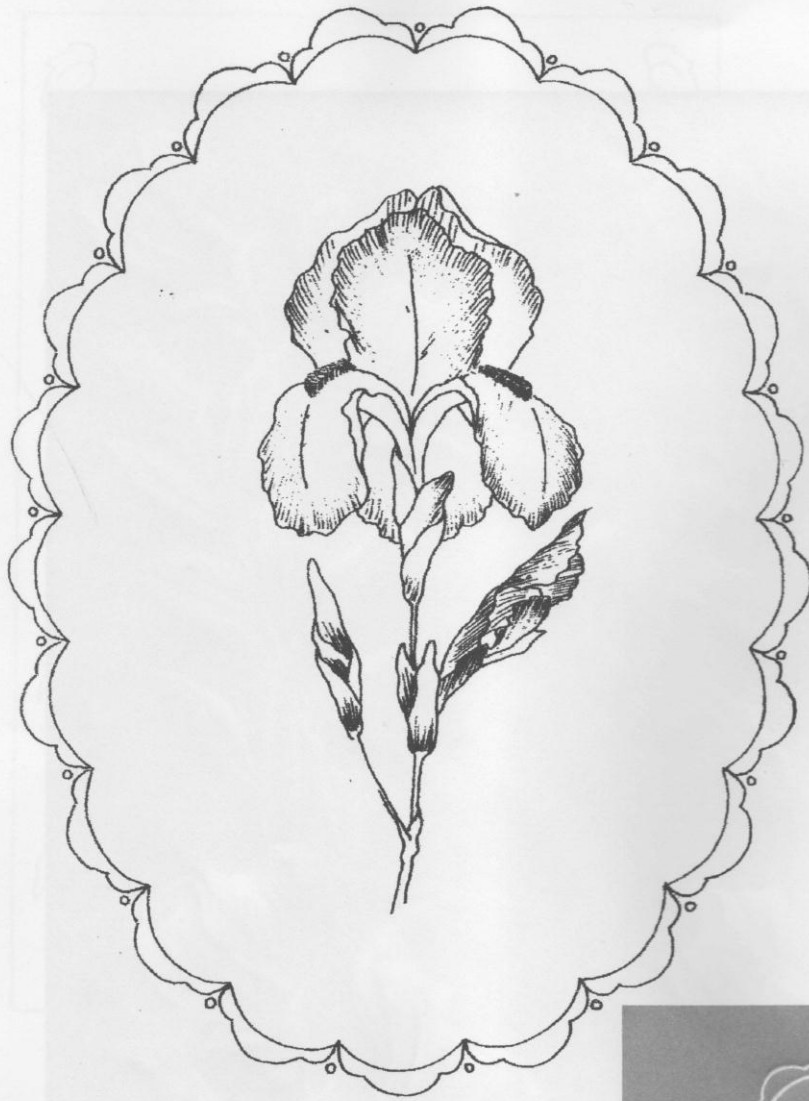




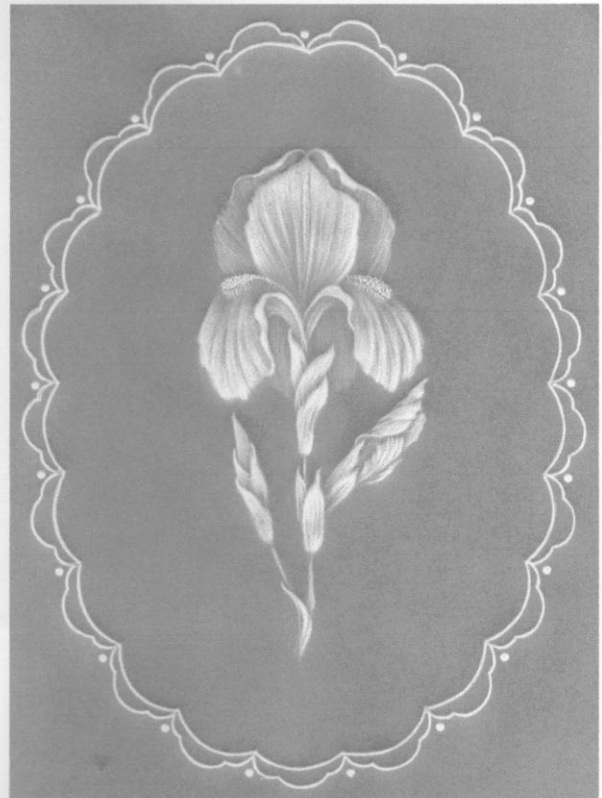


**SUBMISSION 6**



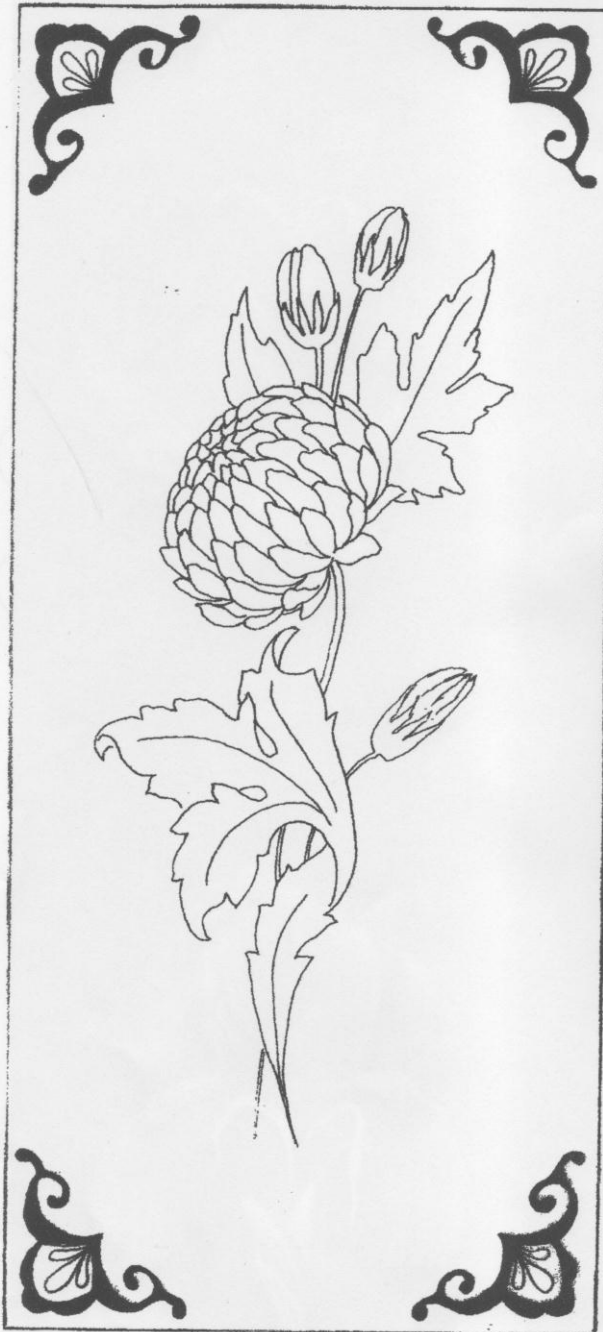


**SUBMISSION 7**

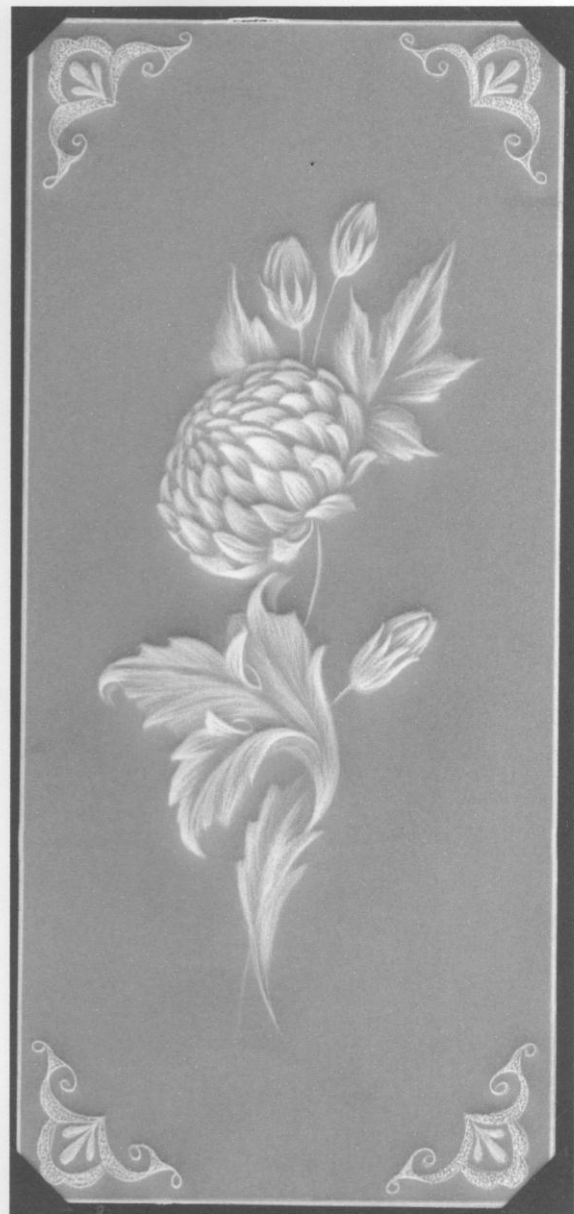


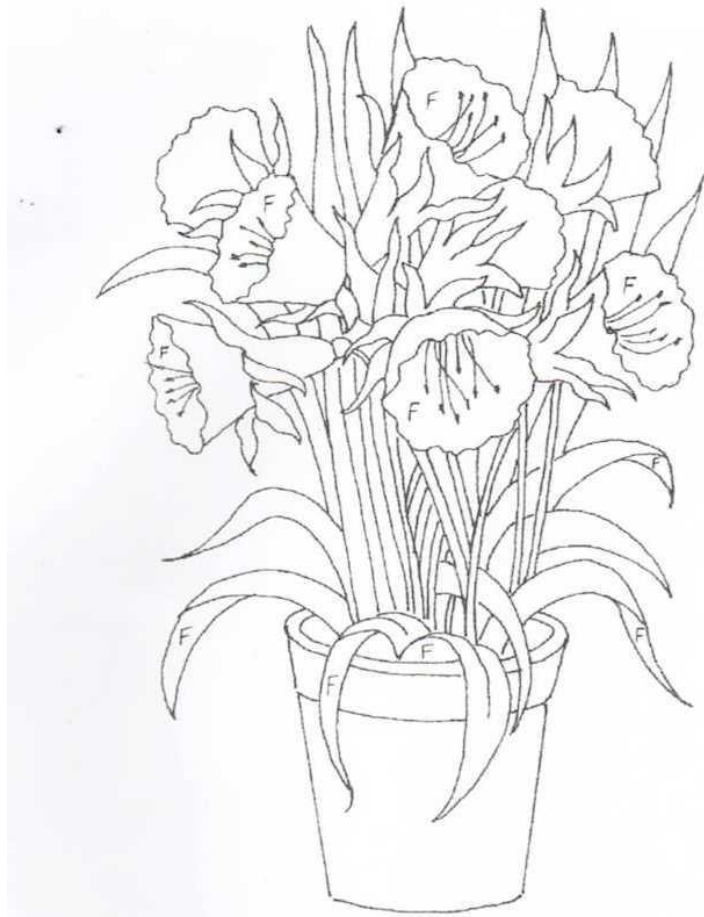


The last two pieces have no stages shown, because you should be able to work those out for yourself now.



**SUBMISSION 8 (Compulsory)**





**SUBMISSION 9 (compulsory)**

## The Embossing Tools:

This was covered to the major extent in the Materials section, but as a refresher:

**PCA® Embossing Ball Tools:** all have 3 green rings embossed at the top of the barrel and are available in five sizes, 6mm Mega, 3mm Large, 2mm Medium, 1mm Small, 0.5mm micro.

**PCA® Shader Tools:** easy to use wire loop tools on steel barrels and are available in five sizes: Soft, Mega, Shader, Mini and Micro

**PCA® Scriber Tools:** Two are available in the range, Single and Twin

**PCA® Sun Tools:** These come in four sizes: Mega, Large, Small and Micro

See the tool chart in the Annex for more details, reference numbers etc.

**Hint:** if you want to **emboss single white rounds**, or circles, do not start from the centre, or you will end up with a grey dot in the middle of your embossing (try it on a scrap and see what I mean). Start with an up and down movement, then side to side, then you can go round and round to finish it off.

**Hint:** if you want a **smaller dot**, rather than a larger spot or circle then place your chosen tool upright on the paper and using a swivel round movement on the barrel, keep the ball steady on the paper, and only move the barrel, a bit like you will use the sun tool when I get to talking about that.

**Hint:** when putting **text** on a card, remember you need to work backwards. Nothing worse than finishing off a card, writing the text from behind and finding it is back to front when looking at the front – yes this hint is also from experience! The PCA® Twin Scriber makes a lovely job of calligraphic text, so make sure you experiment on scraps before moving on to a finished card. How to reverse your text to copy is in the last part of this course.

**Hint:** if you want to emboss **straight lines**, use one of the smaller PCA® Shader tools, like the mini or even the micro, it depends on the thickness you want to achieve. Use it with the scoop up for a wider line and like a fork for a thinner line, and for even finer line, use it side on, each time against a ruler. Remember to keep your fingers off the draw line, or you will end up with a few bumps you don't want! Use a rubber mat.

**Hint:** If a pattern calls for **cross hatching**, then use the PCA® Scriber, or if you want to do a larger area, you can even make it more striking by using the Twin Scriber (make sure you exert equal pressure on both prongs). I have included a grid sheet in the annex of the manual. Use this to mark out the lines in white pencil you want to cross hatch, you don't need to do every line on this grid, maybe every second or third one will suffice, then move your paper to your rubber mat and using a ruler, emboss in your lines. It is often lovely if you use one of the PCA® sun tools on the cross of each hatch, or in the middle of each hatch, just to add interest. The only limit is your imagination. Of course PCA also have their embossing templates which have grid cross hatching in various sizes for both Fine and Bold tools. These will give you complete accuracy, due to the clever design.

**Hint:** when using any **Sun Tool** to create an image, you can either use a piece of hard cardboard, a cutting mat, or your rubber mat (take care with this one as you need less

pressure to make a good image). Hold the tool upright with the tip on the paper, then applying equal pressure make a round swivel movement, keeping the tip of the tool on the paper while you complete one full swivel, then lift. If you try to do these on a deeper embossing mat you may find you will break the paper.....There is a demonstration video on this – see the covering welcome email for details.

**Hint:** it is a good idea to work with a piece of kitchen paper under your resting hand, so as to keep finger marks off your parchment paper.

Embossing using the grids will be covered in that section.

### **PRACTICE:**

Using all of the images that Dorothy has provided, you now need to practice making these pieces until you are happy that you have completed them to the best of your ability.

### **SUBMISSION PIECES**

**You can now choose to submit any 3 of the seven pieces marked “Submissions”, plus there are two compulsory at the end (marked “compulsory”), so in this section you will be submitting FIVE pieces and only 5 pieces for marking and towards your overall mark. You may present your work in any way you wish, and although this will make it look better, it won’t be taken into consideration in the overall marks given.** Each piece should be labelled appropriately. Remember please **DO NOT** present in a hard back folder.

Please refer to the submission slip in the annex for details of how to submit this first piece.