

## FROTTAGE

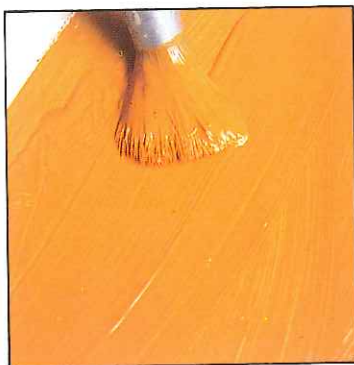
The word "frottage" is derived from the French verb *frotter*, meaning to rub.

The term is associated most often with rubbing on paper over a textured surface so that the underlying pattern comes through. This technique can be used in pastel painting, for example, using the side of the stick. In oil painting, however, the term refers to the technique of creating a rich, irregular texture in wet or semi-wet paint by rubbing a sheet of non-absorbent paper onto an area of flat, opaque color. When the paper is peeled away it drags at the paint, leaving a rough, mottled surface. The paper can be applied to the wet paint either flat or crumpled, the latter producing a stronger pattern.

Frottage is perfect for depicting the rough textures of rock, stone and wood. In addition, it provides a quick, spontaneous way of creating surface interest in broad areas of a painting — in an empty foreground, for example.

The German Surrealist painter Max Ernst (1891-1976) used frottage in his paintings and drawings, often combining it with COLLAGE to create strange, haunting images.

With frottage, the patterns created are absolutely unpredictable, so it is advisable to start by experimenting on a piece of scrap canvas.



### Frottage • Flat paper

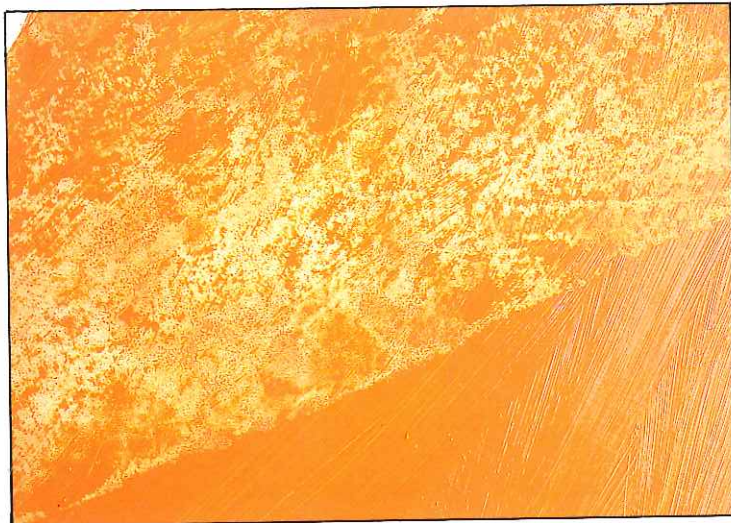
**1** Lay a patch of color, using rich paint thinned with a little oil and turpentine. The thicker the paint you use, the heavier and more ridged the texture will be.



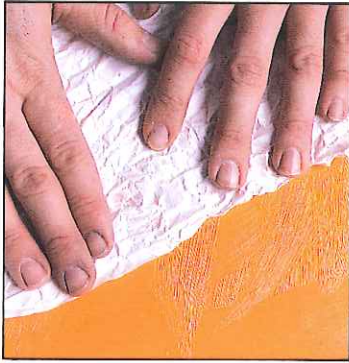
**2** Place a sheet of non-absorbent paper over the paint and press it down gently. Rub lightly over the paper with your fingertips.



**3** Peel the paper away. Because the paint is tacky, the paper drags at it, forming a rough, stippled surface. To alter the texture, you can replace the paper and move it about or rub it. Experiment until you get the effect you want. Leave the painting to dry for at least 48 hours.



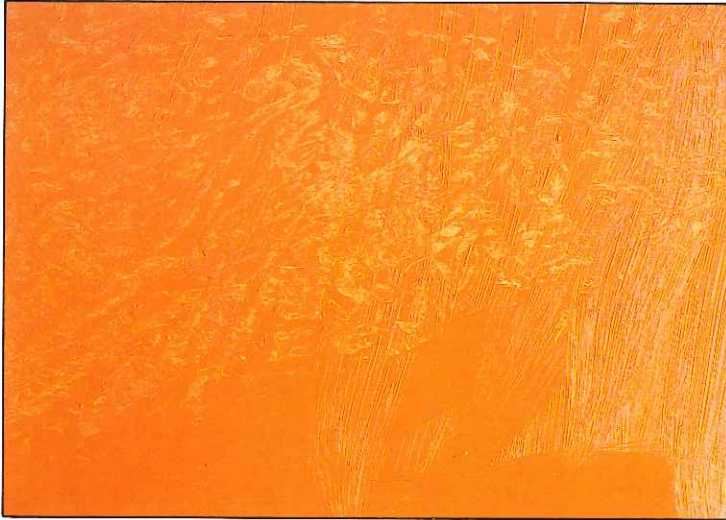
The finished effect



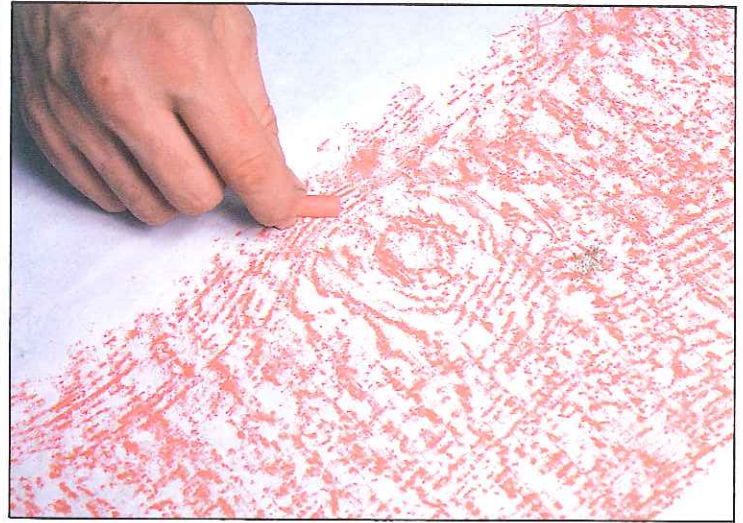
### **Frottage • Crumpled paper**

**1** Apply a patch of thick paint as before. Crumple a sheet of non-absorbent paper into a ball, open it out, then press it into the wet paint.

**2** Carefully peel the paper back from the paint. This creates a more pronounced texture than that achieved with flat paper. Repeat the process with a clean sheet of paper if desired.



**The finished effect**



### **Frottage • Pastel**

In pastel painting, rich textural effects are gained by placing a piece of paper over a surface with a pronounced texture — such as grainy wood or rough stone — and rubbing with the side of the crayon so that the texture comes through. Here the artist is making a rubbing of a wooden floorboard. The frottage technique has a lot of creative potential: try placing textured surfaces selectively under certain sections of a drawing to recreate natural textures or patterns. Alternatively, sections of frottage work can be cut up and then re-assembled and glued down to a new support to make a collage. Further images can be superimposed over frottage work to create unusual or disturbing images.