INTRODUCTION
Folklore says that fairies use Hollyhock flowers as skirts. Perhaps little girls instinctively know that ancient wisdom when they make fairy dolls from blossoms and buds?

So many of us made delicate ballerinas and fairies out of hollyhocks and wooden toothpicks. The full blossoms, turned upside-down, created the dancer’s torso and billowing skirt. A wooden toothpick attached her head, made from a bud with the sepals removed to reveal tiny eyes. A second toothpick gave her outstretched arms. Our tissue holder will bring back memories of blue summer skies—and hopefully, let you forget that you need a tissue.

PALETTE
DecoArt Extreme Sheen Silver #16085
Vintage Effect Wash—White #14485
DecoArt Americana Acrylics
Banana Cream #13545
Black Plum #13172
Burlap #13554
Celery Green #13208
Colonial Blue #13613
Grey Sky #13111
Light Avocado #13106
Margarita #13541
Midnite Green #13084
Sea Glass #13520
Snow White #13001
Winter Blue #13190

SURFACE
Large Tissue Box w/ Drawer #63203

MISC. SUPPLIES
Multi Purpose Sealer #87392
Americana Dura Clear Soft Touch Varnish 8 oz #72013
Cake Furniture Wax (not a liquid polish); car wax will also work
Sandpaper or Small Sanding Pad—Fine/Extra Fine #70795
Gray Graphite Paper 18x36 #70141
Soft Grip Embossing & Stylus set of 3 #70125
C-through ruler
Misc. painting supplies (palette, water container, etc.)

BRUSHES
Papillon by the Artists’ Club
Round size 6 #20163
Liner size 10/0 #20145
Glaze Wash size 1 inch #20103

Note: Round brushes are my current brush of choice. I can flatten them to make a flat or filbert. I can point them to make them behave like a round or liner. The entire painting was completed with just these two brushes.

TECHNIQUE AND THEORY
We will also use some interesting techniques: the leaves will be painted in their entirety—even those leaves that are behind the blossoms and will be somewhat hidden when the flowers are painted. The flower petals are delicate and thin. They are semi-transparent. You can see through them except when they turn, are ruffled, or thicker at the flower bases. So, we will use DecoArt’s Vintage Effect Wash to paint the flowers.

This is not the typical use for the Vintage Effect Wash paints. DecoArt’s website states, “Use over raw or finished surfaces to achieve a light and washed-out look. Nordic design trends are inspiring this semi-transparent, pickling wash on everything from furniture to home decor items. Its transparency gives makers complete control over the color intensity and amount of weathering, and it doesn’t hide the natural wood grain.”

Because it is seldom advisable to mix paints from different lines (they are all formulated differently to allow them to be used for different purposes), we will not mix the Vintage Effects directly with the Americanas. We will paint the blossoms one petal at a time with the Vintage Effect, and, while it is still wet, we will brush in some colors and opactity with DecoArt Americanas.

In addition to using the Vintage Effects Wash paints in an usual and unexpected way (I can’t wait to use them in other designs), this project presents a lesson in focal area. The focal area is the general area that invites the viewer’s eye into the painting. It is the area that uses the majority of paints that are warmer, brighter, and lighter. It is the area where most of the
detail is found. It is not an object—it is an area. Without a focal area a painting lacks sophistication. The focal area can be developed in many ways, the simplest method uses the “rule of thirds.” If you wish to learn more, explore this online. In this project, the focal area is generally located by the red circle. I say “generally” located because despite the use of the circle, the focal area does not have hard boundaries. Some warm colors, some details, etc. often stray outside the focal area.

PREPARATION
First, we must also consider the box’s location in preparation. It may sit where there is considerable moisture.

Seal all sides of piece and stand with DecoArt Americana All-purpose Sealer. Sand lightly in direction of grain. Basecoat inside and out with Winter Blue. The background is painted with slipslap “x” strokes. Using a large 1” flat brush. The brush is not cleaned between paints; if there is too much of a color in the brush, wipe it clean with a paper towel. The paper towel or your finger can also be used to blend away sharp lines between paints.

Slide the drawer into the frame. Be sure that it doesn’t stick; if it does, sand the edges so it freely moves in and out. Start at the top right with Colonial Blue and work down the frame. At about the half way mark, pick up Celery Green and continue with the slip slap strokes down to the lower edge. Working, still with Celery Green, go back up the frame, switching back to Colonial Blue and up across the top. You should be able to cover the entire right side and about one third of the front in a couple of passes.

At about one third into the front, start picking up Grey Sky at the Top and use Celery on the lower portion. By the time the background extends to the right corner, the upper portion should be almost entirely Grey Sky (there will be almost no Colonial Blue left in your brush). At about 2/3 across the front, start picking up some Burlap and mix it both into the Grey Sky and Celery Green. The left side is cooler in overall tone; the right side is warmer and lighter. Place a few strokes of the cool into the warm areas and visa versa. Take a look—the piece should remind you of Monet at this point.

Remove the drawer immediately and extend the background onto the drawer edges and inner frame. Use the leftover paint to finish the frame inside.

Paint the knob Celery Green. I chose to paint the edges, rim in the tissue opening, and feet with Extreme Sheen Sterling Silver. This is optional can be done at any stage. Figures 2-5 are provided as before and after to help you decide if you wish to add the silver accents. Use only one coat of silver. Because Sterling Silver is somewhat transparent and it is close in both hue and
temperature to our background, it will remain very soft and appear to melt into our background.

Let the surface dry completely—preferably several hours.

Coat the inside of the frame and drawer with two coats of varnish (wait two hours between coats). This includes all areas that are not going to be painted with the design. Once dry, apply a coat of wax to the drawer sides and the inside of the hole where the drawer slides. Rub wax until smooth. This prevents the drawer from sticking to the frame while it is sitting in place, and the front of the drawer is being painted. Remember that once these surfaces are waxed, they will repel varnish and paint.

Insert drawer, glue knob in place, and transfer the leaf line drawing to front and sides, using your favorite method.

Two line drawings are provided. The leaves are painted first and in their entirety. Even those parts of the leaves that will be covered by the flowers are painted. The flowers are painted in the next step/layer and the goal is to keep them very transparent so the leaves show through the flower petals. If I were to paint the sample again, I would paint the flowers even more transparent than the photos show them to be here.
PAINTING INSTRUCTIONS

Hollyhock Leaves
The leaves are painted mostly with Celery Green and Light Avocado. Celery Green is one of the background paints and Light Avocado is similar temperature to Celery Green and only slightly darker. This will help keep the design soft. We will use the paints that are much darker or lighter than the background only sparingly. Midnite Green is used to create a few dark areas; each of these darker areas is triangular and indicates a part of the leaf that is behind or recedes. Sea Glass (a cooler, lighter green) and Margarita (a warmer, lighter green) will create lights and give the leaves form. The veins are subtle and only appear as hints. They are created by either highlight or shade on either or both sides of the vein. The veins are curved and graceful; they are not straight lines. Let them fade into the leaf before they reach the tip of the leaf.

The leaves are painted with a round brush, flattened to provide a filbert. The brush can also be stood on end to create a liner or flat as needed. The stems are painted with the edge of the flattened round.

Pick up Celery Green and, starting at the center of the leaf, work outward to the tip of that leaf section. Without cleaning your brush, pick up Avocado Green, Sea Glass, or Margarita, as indicated by Figures 6-7. Finish all the leaves, stems, and sepals Midnite Green is tucked into the triangular areas and walked outward to create the darker shading. Don’t forget to paint the sepals on the “knob” bud. Painting both the front and back of the sepals for the blossom on the left was probably “overkill,” but it seemed to be a good idea at the time.

Let the leaves dry—preferably a couple of hours, so the next coat of paint will not harm the leaves.

Transfer line drawing for the flowers.

Hollyhock Blossoms
All strokes start at the petals edge, with a very little amount of paint (Vintage Effect Wash White) in a round brush (flattened to form a filbert) and are pulled toward the center of the blossom. Lift the brush and reduce pressure and make the paint more transparent. Also, lift the brush and use less pressure to make the stroke thinner as it approaches the blossom’s centers.

Use the photos to suggest where the wash should be allowed to be heavier and more opaque. Also use the photos to suggest where different colors of Americana would be pleasing.

If the Vintage Effect becomes too thick and the leaves are no longer visible through them, you can lift paint
with your brush and clean water. Of course, we would not expect the center of the blossoms to be transparent.

Start with the uppermost blossom, at a petal’s edge with a tiny bit of Vintage Effect Wash White and stroke towards the center of the flower. Repeat as often as needed to complete the petal. While the Vintage Effect is still wet, add very subtle hints of Celery Green, Burlap, and/or Colonial Blue. Snow White can be used to create ruffles and texture. The very brightest whites are also found on and in this upper blossom. Refer to Figure 8. Complete all five petals of the blossom.

Resist the temptation to paint any of the leaves over the blossoms if you think the petals are too heavy; you will not regain transparency, and it will make a mess.

The upper flower has a fold in the left-most petal. It is simpler than it looks. Using a liner and Snow White, paint an “S” along the petal’s edge. Tuck dark (a tiny bit of Midnite Green) in each loop of the “S.” Highlight the top of the fold with Snow White. This flower gets more attention than the flower beneath it. There is a dilute wash of Black Plum and another of Burlap (warmth) to wash its petals. See Figure 9.

The lower full blossom is also given some attention; but not as much as the flower above it. It gets a very slight and dilute wash of burlap on the uppermost petal. This helps keep the focal area in the higher portion of the flowers. There is a subtle turned edge along the edge of the lower petal of the lower-most blossom. It is kept subtle because, again, the viewer is supposed to look first higher in the design (the focal area and included in the topic of “composition.”) The dark of the shadow cast by the turned edge is darker than the rest of the petal, but we will not use Midnite Green. Subtlety is created by using a darker paint that is not truly dark dark. The shadow was created by the contrast between the Snow White of the folded edge and the thin coat of Vintage Wash that allowed the background to show through the petal. See Figure 10.

Use a liner brush to drag fine lines of Black Plum from the center of the blossom. This area should mimic each flower’s outline. For example, both major flowers are taller than wide. To be consistent, the Black Plum center is also taller than wide.

A star is painted in the very center of each blossom first with Celery Green and then a smaller star inside that with Midnite Green. The flower pistils are stippled with Midnite Green and then Celery Green. A few dots of Banana Cream are added with a stylus. Load the stylus and start at the base of the pistil. Do not reload the stylus. This will create dots that decrease in size as the approach the pistils’ tips.

Both the two major blossoms are fully open and fac-
ing the viewer. Their centers are painted in Black Plum and Midnite Green—the darkest colors on our palette. This provides contrast with the rest of the design and also supports our efforts to keep the focal area within the red circle. Banana Cream is found only on the two flower pistils. Do you now understand why?

**Buds**

One of the distinguishing marks of Hollyhock is their perfect sphere-like buds. The buds highest on the stalk are the youngest and are still very closed. The sepals form the sphere and are painted using the leaf colors. There is a highlight of Margarita on the right half side.

The buds lower down on the stalk are a bit older and more ready to open. If the bud is open enough to show some petals, but the petals are still wound tightly into a sphere, they are created by patting Vintage Wash. The variety of opacity will create petals. A circular shaped highlight is painted with Snow White on the right half side of each closed bud.

The lowest buds are more open and have a few petals peaking out of the sepals. These petals are painted the same as the blossom petals. See **Figures 11–12**.

Finish by adding tiny shadows of Light Avocado or Midnite Green on the leaves where the flower and bud petals overlap the leaves or stems. Seek out any areas that are triangular. They almost always look good shaded. See **Figure 13** for some examples where tiny darker triangles were tucked under the blossoms; they are marked with red “x”. Remember that your design may vary from mine.

**FINISHING**

Sign your piece with pride. Let Dry and apply two or more coats of DecoArt American’s Soft Touch.
To ensure your pattern is at 100%, this box should measure 1" x 1" when printed.
Leaf Line Drawing

front of box
To ensure your pattern is at 100%, this box should measure 1" x 1" when printed.
No.