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Stitching Your Passion: A Fiber Accordion “Book” of What’s Important to You

Description:

What piques your interest: Playing with color and patterns? Preserving memories? Telling your family’s history? Recording your travel adventures? Addressing important causes? An accordion “book” made with textiles is a fun way to creatively pursue those interests. We will turn 2-D pieces into 3-D artwork that will showcase what engages your attention. We will make “pages” (panels) using a stiff interfacing onto which we fuse the fabrics and embellishments that best narrate the themes we explore—anything from the birds and flowers you notice on a walk in your neighborhood to environmental and social issues. The front of the panels can be enhanced with stitching, beads, buttons, photos, bits of lace or tulle, ribbons, yarn, small twigs, leaves, coins, and other mementos. Fusing fabric or handmade paper to the back of the panels can hide the stitches. Machine- or hand-sewing joins the panels together so they can fold closed or open like an accordion. Bamboo skewers, fine dowels, knitting needles, or chopsticks will make them stand on a shelf, table, mantel, window sill, or pedestal in various configurations like a fiber sculpture. Let your imagination roam freely among the possibilities.

Materials List:

1. **Heavyweight stabilizer/interfacing:** Pellon Peltex 70 (no fusible side) or 71F (fusible on one side) or Timtex. A bolt comes 20” wide—you’ll need at least 1 yard. How many panels you can cut depends on the height and width of each panel. If you think you’ll make tall panels, then buy more yardage, but a yard should be enough at first.
2. **Fusibles:** Wonder-Under (paper-backed) and/or Mistyfuse (ultra-sheer not paper-backed).
3. **Fabric:** depending on the theme of your “book,” select fabrics to reflect what you’re aiming for. If you want to use photos and are able to print them on cloth, prepare them ahead of time; or you can attach actual photos to a cloth background. If you want to incorporate vintage-looking items, find fabric lines that contain such elements (words, labels, newsprint, images) to collage with (e.g., Tim Holtz, Cathe Holden). Look through

your stash, especially scraps, for what suits your topic or what creates an eye-catching abstract display of colors and designs. If you prefer to use felt or pieces of weaving instead of fabric, that's perfectly ok.

4. **Embellishments:** whatever adds to the story or message your "book" is trying to convey; or you can keep things simple and just add stitching to the fabric.
5. **Support sticks:** bamboo skewers, knitting needles, dowels, or chopsticks so you can stabilize your "book" on a level surface. If your panels are short, they'll stand up without support.
6. **Sewing machine** (and its manual, in case you run into a problem), with enough bobbins if you change colors.
7. **Thread and needles** for hand-stitching as well as for machine-stitching (zigzag) around each panel. Do you want the color to contrast or blend in?
8. **Straight pins** to hold layers and embellishments in place as you decide on placement.
9. **Cutting board, rotary cutter, and ruler** to make even-sized panels.
10. **Scissors** for cutting WonderUnder (it's best not to use the same scissors or rotary cutters for paper and fabric because paper has a dulling effect); **snips** for cutting thread.
11. Your own **ironing station** (if you don't want to wait while others are ironing) and a **non-stick pressing sheet** to avoid stickiness from fusing.
12. An **Ottolite** if it helps you to see better when stitching.
13. **Snacks and water** to keep your energy up! And don't forget your **glasses!**