

## WORKSHOP: "KEEPSAKE BOXES"



**Summary:** Re-work a wood cutlery box into a keepsake box by removing the velour insides, sanding and refinishing. The inside/outside can be recovered and embellished with papers, paint, collage materials, fabrics and found objects.

### Materials and Equipment:

wood cutlery box	3 pieces of sandpaper, assorted grits
2 pieces decorative papers	foam brush
1 medium sized piece of fabric	paint brushes, assorted sizes
pot of mat gel medium	palette knife or plastic knife
pot of sludge primer	1 small piece of flexible plastic with straight edge
acrylic paints – assorted colours	plastic lids for palettes
fabric or leather scraps	1 dust mask
pencil and eraser	scissors
silhouette animal shapes	instructions/ideas sheet
ruler	

### Class Plan:

1. Rip out cutlery guides from inside the box and velour linings.
2. Wearing a dust mask, sand and/or plane rough glue from inside surfaces. A small planer makes this very fast if available.
3. Lightly sand entire box outsides, wearing a dust mask.
4. Wipe clean all box surfaces.
5. Decide which surfaces to cover with which materials. Work from inside out if possible. We hope you like the colour choices in your box and/or found something around your own house to repurpose instead.
6. Applying paint to box surfaces:
  - a. Decide which surfaces will be painted. Paint those areas first before adhering any paper or fabric to avoid having to worry about getting paint on fabrics/papers. Allow to dry.
  - b. I painted the outside back edge of my box blue to look like sky.



- c. Lightly sand all surfaces first for better paint adhesion.
- d. Prime surface first with primer provided (recommended but not essential).



- e. Paint on primed box surfaces as you like.

7. Applying papers to inside/outside surfaces:

- a. Measure box inside lid surface to cover and cut paper to size. If doing the sides as well, cut a piece to fit each surface.
- b. I applied brown flowery paper to the inside of the lid of my box to look like a garden.



- c. Gel medium is best for paper so if you don't have enough for all surfaces save it for the paper.
- d. Spread gel medium on one surface using a palette knife. Use a very thin coat for paper. Go over the gel medium with a foam roller or brush to make it even and prevent wrinkles.
- e. Apply paper over gel medium lining up edges, and gently smooth from the centre outward.
- f. Wipe off any excess gel that comes out at edges and allow it to dry.

8. Applying fabric to box surfaces:

- a. Measure box inside base surface to cover and cut fabric pieces to fit each surface.
- b. I applied fabric to the inside base of my box in sections to look like grass.



- c. The gel medium works for fabric, but so does regular glue.
- d. Spread gel or glue evenly on one surface at a time using a plastic knife or piece of flexible plastic with a straight edge. Use more for fabric than with paper. Go over the gel medium with foam brush to make it even.



- e. Apply fabric over gel/glue lining up edges and smoothing from the centre outward.
  - f. Wipe off any excess gel that comes out at edges and allow it to dry.
  - g. If desired, put a tiny amount of gel/glue (or fray preventer if you have it) along raw fabric edges to prevent fraying.
  - h. You can cut materials in sections, collage and overlap them as desired.
  - i. Have fun! Add materials of your own from home like magazines or pieces of old clothing allowing each layer to dry.
9. Applying leather or fabric pieces to box surfaces:
- a. I applied leather patches to the sides, front edge and top of my box. I used larger squares on top to look like fields, and I overlapped the edges. I then cut out little bird shapes and applied a

few on top, soaring over the fields (pattern provided, or make your own).



- b. Get creative with your box! You can use your own materials such as pieces of an old pair of jeans instead of leather if you like.
  - c. Apply gel medium or wood glue to the back of the pieces of leather and apply to your box.
  - d. Press each piece gently by hand or roll with a sturdy cardboard tube.
  - e. Wipe any excess gel/glue that comes out the edges.
  - f. Allow each layer to dry.
10. As you add materials to your box, make sure it will still open and close properly, particularly when adding thing on or near the hinges and edges that touch when closed.
11. Add embellishments of your own if you like: buttons, found objects, braids, etc.

#### **Useful Information/Adaptions/Variations:**

- Turn the box on its side and hang it on the wall to make a key cupboard by adding hooks inside and a magnetic closure.
- Add dividers to your box with wood scraps or thick paper.
- Use your box to store your art materials.

#### **Trouble Shooting:**

- If you add fabric and want to change it, pulling hard on the fabric will tear it off the box (pliers help). Re-sand underneath and apply something else instead.
- If you add paper and want to change it, if it is smooth you could apply new paper over top.
- Using a very thin coat of gel medium will avoid lumps and paper wrinkling. Try to avoid attempts to reposition the paper once placed on the gel.
- Some types of glue contain more moisture and may cause paper wrinkling. Stick with the gel medium if possible, and use a short piece of dowel to smooth excess gel from the centre out to edges for wiping away.