
Upcycled Pouch with Maya Donenfeld

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- We're gonna be working with Tyvek, which is a cross between cloth and paper, but it has this fabric consistency that's really great for sewing. We're gonna deconstruct an envelope. Then, we're going to paint it, stamp it, and then I'm gonna teach you how to stitch it up by hand with an installed zipper. And, you'll have a fabulous little pouch. (zipper zips)

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- To make your traffic pouch we're gonna need these tools. A self-healing cutting mat, and acrylic ruler, pencil, and a craft knife, some button thread, and a needle that has a head big enough for such thick thread, and a really sharp point, some basic scissors, you don't want to use your fabric shears because the blade will be dulled by the Tyvek. You'll need an ink pad for your stamping and I like to use StazOn, it's a nice permanent solvent ink. I use my own hand carved stamps, but you can use any stamps that you have on hand, or ones that you might find at a craft store. Along with that, you'll also be using acrylic paint. Standard acrylic paint works beautifully. You'll need a rag. I use just a regular old scrap from a t-shirt. A brush. You'll need zippers. The length is really not important as long as it is long enough to stretch across the width of your pouch. And you're gonna need, of course, Tyvek mailers. And you wanna protect your surface because you're gonna get paint on it. So put something down.

Chapter 3 - Painting Tyvek

Dissecting envelope

- Gonna show you how to take apart an envelope so that you can maximize how much space you have to create the largest pouch possible. You can make any size you want out of the scraps but let's start with the big one. First we're gonna cut off the adhesive side. Next we're gonna cut off the bottom. This area right here has only been attached by glue and so you don't want to have that part be in your pouch, if you can help it. So we're just gonna cut it right off. We're gonna do the same with the center seam. Just gonna cut right in. Now we have this nice big open space. We're gonna cut the sides off, so that we can just fold it up and have our pouch. What I'm gonna do next is I'm gonna use my ruler and my X-Acto knife so I can get a nice clean edge. Let's just do the same thing to the other side. Gonna flip it over. I'm positioning the edge of the ruler right along the seam. Great. And now I have a great rectangle. The interior of the bag is going to be wherever the label was. Just gonna fold it right up. Okay, so this is the basis of what our pouch is going to be made of.

Painting and stamping

- So let's paint our Tyvek. I'm gonna use this bright blue, and I'm going to paint it by pouring some directly onto the envelope. I'm starting in the center then I'm gonna take my brush and I'm just gonna brush it all over, wanna really cover the surface. And I'm gonna need some more, and I'm working fast because I don't want it to dry. The reason is that I'm going to be wiping off all of the excess so that you can really see the flash spun plastic that the Tyvek is created from, because it's this incredible texture. So let's see if we can... When you wipe it away, you can see what it reveals.

I'm using my rag, and I'm really pushing the paint, into the surface and off of the edges. You might wanna take a little color sample and see, 'cause sometimes you'll be surprised what color will be revealed, so you might wanna do a few swatches. Now we're gonna let this dry. It's gonna feel just lightly damp to the touch, but you really wanna let it dry for at least a few hours before you stamp on it. I have one that already dried waiting for us, so I'll move this one over and we'll swap these. I'm gonna bring my stamps and my ink. So, when I do stamping I try to think about the space of this pouch and where I wanna line it up, if I wanted to just do one print, or if I wanted to create an entire pattern. And I try to remember, well this is going to be the front and this is going to be the back. I'm gonna open it up and just start printing. I'm gonna take this feather, stamp it with my ink, notice that I'm taking the ink and applying it to the stamp rather than the reverse, which is the stamp to the ink. This is gonna give you even coverage. Then I'm just gonna randomly place them. Sometimes I like to go off the edge just to create an overall design, as if it's been cut from a big roll of fabric. Here I'm just going right over the seam. I'm using two different stamps just for interest, so now I'm going to bring in the other stamp. And any little imperfections just create a wonderful look of handmade. Now this is really starting to look like a piece of fabric. So you're gonna let this stamp ink dry for at least 15 minutes. I'm gonna do one more, sometimes it's hard to stop, it's really fun. Okay, now it's finished, and it's just gonna wait for us until it dries.

Chapter 4 - Making Pouch

Cut and install zipper

- Let's trim up the edges on our piece of Tyvek by using an X-Acto knife again and our ruler. Just gonna make sure that all the edges are nice and clean and straight. I'm using the grid, once again, from this cutting mat. (knife slicing) There was a little extra bit of a seam here. I just cut that off, and I'm gonna straighten out this top edge. It's pretty good, but I'm gonna make it a little bit straighter. (knife slicing) I'm gonna do the same thing right here. I'm using the weight of my hands to put pressure down so that it doesn't shift. (knife slicing) Let's fold this in half so we can trim the edges and make sure that all the sides are even. (knife slicing) I wanna make sure that the front and the back are in alignment with one another. (knife slicing) And this last side looks pretty square, but we're just gonna make sure. (knife slicing) It's ready for inserting our zipper. I'm so excited to show you how. We're gonna take this zipper, and we are going to place it face down on top of the front edge of our pouch, and then we're going to be doing a nice seam of stitches, just a running stitch along this underside, and the way that I usually do a straight stitch is to open it up and to use my ruler to create approximately a quarter-of-an-inch seam allowance with this little reminder of a pencil line. (pencil drawing) I'm gonna do the same thing on the other side. (pencil drawing) Usually when you're inserting a zipper, you're gonna wanna pin it in place so it feels secure, but you don't wanna ever put any unintentional holes with needles or pins into Tyvek because they're permanent. You can't take them away. So, we're just gonna go in slow motion because we're doing hand-stitching and hold our zipper in place the whole time. I'm gonna take one of my pre-loaded needles. It's double-stranded and tied with a nice secure knot. The top edge of the zipper is going to be right along the top edge of the front of my pouch. There is a little bit of metal hardware right here that ends each zipper. This is just to anchor it in place. This one is really important to keep right about a quarter-of-an-inch to half-an-inch from your edge. So, there's gonna be a little excess flap on most zippers. Insert your needle from the inside to the outside. Start on your pencil line. (thread pulling through material) You're gonna continue a straight running stitch all along this side. You'll notice that I unzipped my zipper just a tiny bit to give myself some more room for creating my

seam. Once I've reached the zipper, I'm going to actually zip up the zipper to the end and then continue sewing. (thread pulling through material) Once you come to the end, you're going to knot your thread. I'm gonna trim this off, these little tails. The other side of the zipper is attached the same way. Right side of the zipper to the right side of the back of the pouch. The way that we're gonna do this is to fold it back onto itself and to make sure that this edge of the Tyvek is also flush with the edge of the zipper. I like to make sure that these beginning anchor points on the zipper are matched and even with each other. And I'll begin stitching along the pencil edge of this side of the Tyvek. (thread pulling through material) You're gonna continue to stitch all the way to the opposite edge, and as you can see, these are not perfect little stitches, and that's absolutely fine. I like to think of this kind of sewing as cooking, not baking. It's not a perfect science. There's lots of room for improvisation.

Finish sides

- Once you've attached the zipper, there are only two seams left. It's such an easy little bit of running stitch and I want to show you how we're going to enclose the zipper so that it's facing the right direction. I've already done this side and as you'll see, I've tucked the zipper facing inward towards the interior of the bag. I'm going to do the same thing on this side, which is the end of the zipper. And this is the side that you're going to find you have a little excess. Absolutely no worries. You're going to be able to snip it off at the end and we're going to anchor these stitches in place. Fold the zipper inward and I'm going to insert my needle from one side. Going to wrap it around several times. This is going to anchor that back of the zipper in place. Button thread is so sturdy. It's one of the reasons I love it. This is really tough stuff. Tuck it in. One thing you have to remember before you finish up your final seam is to unzip your zipper so that you can turn it right side out at the very end. We are in the home stretch now. You're going to follow along to the very end. And then you're just going to do a simple knot and you'll be done.

Finish and variations

- And here's my final stitch. I'm going to knot it off. I'll snip off these tails, too. And now let's look at this anchored end of the zipper. You can keep this here or we can simply snip it off. Let's turn it right side out. I'm going to unzip it a little bit more. I'm going to poke out the edges and the corners. And I'm going to do a nice finger pressing along the zipper. And now you have your very own Tyvek pouch. This project comes from my book *Reinvention* where I created an entire chapter based just on Tyvek. And I've got a bunch of variations for this pouch. You can make them any shape or color. You just have to remember that you're going to follow all along one huge seam on the bottom. Beyond just doing different shapes and colors, you can create an entire different paint effect by doing an ombre style where you've got a gradation of different colors. I really like the aesthetic of having something that's a real earth-toned one. This is one of my favorites. So here's an entire array of all different kinds of pouches that you can make simply by using something from your mailbox.