
Sustainable Play: Holiday Crafts with Suzy Ultman

Chapter 1 - Sustainable Play: Holiday Crafts

Overview

- Give your holiday a heartfelt touch with handmade gifts and decorations. Hi, I'm Suzy Ultman, illustrator, toy maker, and storyteller. Join me as we take everyday household items and turn them into magical holiday creations. We'll be cutting and painting, making this unicorn menorah, and a whole bunch of holiday symbols that you can use as gift tags, ornaments, decoration, and a whole lot more. I provided a PDF with templates so everything is easy to cut out and step-by-step instructions for painting and decorating. But you can also use your imagination and memories from holidays past and present, and creating something wonderful for the future. In the spirit of handmade gifting, have a very happy holidays. (upbeat holiday music)

Materials

- Here are the materials for a holiday craftathon. You'll need several cereal boxes for these projects. One large-sized cereal box for the magical unicorn menorah, and then two to three cereal boxes for your gift tags and ornaments, depending how many you'd like to make. Then we have the PDFs that have the templates for everything from the magical unicorn menorah to a whole bunch of awesome gift tags and ornaments. There's glue. You can use liquid glue or you can use glue stick. There's scissors. We're gonna be doing a lot of cutting on these projects. Here, I have several different black pens of different thicknesses. I do a lot of drawing in black, so I like to have a choice of different black pens. And then I have my pencil and eraser. You'll need at least nine clothespins if you're making the menorah. My paints and palette. I've got water, and I always have a handy dandy paper towel to keep my hands clean and my brushes clean. Bunch of different size paintbrushes, and then all of your favorite coloring tools. I've got my POSCA pens, which are acrylic markers, thick ones. I've got some thin acrylic markers and colored pencils. And then to string your ornaments and gift tags, I've got some really nice bright colored yarns. And then, finally, a ruler and a hole punch. Let's get crafting.

Magical Unicorn Menorah

- First up on our tour of holiday projects is a magical unicorn menorah. We're gonna cut our template. (scissors snipping) There's the main part of our menorah. And now I'll cut the base pieces. (scissors snipping) So now I need to trace this onto the cardboard of the cereal box. Got it opened and flat. Going to cut. (scissors snipping) And I want the bottom edge of my menorah to be as straight as possible. So I'm going to line it up off of the straight line of the cereal box. That gives me a nice straight line. And then just trace the whole way around. Now, I forgot to add in my cut marks here. You want these to be as exact as possible. I'm gonna fold it right like that. And then just draw a line here. Oops. And a line here. Next, you're gonna cut around your menorah. When I cut out of cardboard like this, the first thing I like to do is cut in closely. (scissors snipping) I'm taking off the excess cardboard. (scissors snipping) And now I'll go in and cut precisely. I'm gonna follow this line down here of the cardboard box. The straight edge here, so that the bottom of my unicorn is straight. (scissors snipping) As you cut through the unicorn's mane, it might be helpful to turn the cardboard instead of your scissors, and then you can even go back and even out some of the curves if you feel like it. (scissors snipping) That's the trickiest part of all of the cutting. It's that little area.

And there you have your unicorn. Next, we're gonna do the bottom bases. And I'm just gonna take a little scrap piece here. I'm gonna straighten up this line a little bit. I'm gonna trace my two bases. And again, I forgot to cut the notch. Put that here. Draw that mark. Then you can cut these out. Before I do anything more, I'm gonna cut all of the notches. Try to be as precise as possible. All right, then I'm gonna put these two over here. I'm gonna erase some of these lines. All right, now for the fun part. We're gonna draw the mane and the eye of our unicorn. So coming in about an inch, draw a line down following the neckline. And then when you hit the back of the unicorn, come over and we're gonna make some weaves that mimic the curve of the mane right about here. I'm gonna do that once more. This is going to be the mane of our unicorn. And now we're gonna draw an eye. And we'll put in our mouth when we're done painting. And it's time to get our paint out. I'm gonna get a whole mess of white. Shake up your white paint, put it on your palette. I'm also gonna grab a piece of scrap paper so that I don't get my table all messy. I'm gonna put it under the unicorn and I'm gonna take, hmm, let's start with a medium brush because I wanna paint around the eye and part of the mane. I'm gonna take my white and I'm going to paint around the edge of the eye. And then I'm gonna paint around the neckline and the back line. And I'm gonna paint this middle part of the mane white. For the colors of the menorah, I chose something that felt along the lines of Hanukkah. They're very celebratory. I've got the blue and the yellow that are traditionally Hanukkah with a little bit of bright pink in there. But if you wanna mix it up and add your own colors, maybe make the menorah silver, you can go for it. Also, if you don't wanna do this much painting, you could leave the body of the menorah plain and add your color in different places. We're gonna do the whole body of the unicorn in white. I'm gonna grab my big brush because it will go a lot faster with a big brush. Look at that. Don't be afraid to really lay that paint on there. Before I move on to the next step, I'd love for my white paint to be dry. If you're at home, you can let it just sit and dry. You can use a blow dryer. I've got a heat gun, so I'm going to use that. (heat gun whirring) It's okay if paint gets between the notches but you don't want it to clog them up, so I just kind of wiggle them a little bit to loosen them. All right, I'm gonna let this dry a little bit more and while that's happening, I'm going to paint the base pieces with the white. And I'm actually gonna paint them over here. Their own little spot. And they can dry while we finish the unicorn. Next, I'm going to take my black marker. I'll get one that's a little bit wetter. There we go. And I'm going to draw in the eyeball of the unicorn. And then give our unicorn a little mouth. Now we move on to the yellow. And going back to my medium brush, I'm going to add yellow in the mane right here. Okay. And now right in the center about right there, I'm going to write Happy Hanukkah. There are many different ways to write the word Hanukkah, just choose your favorite and place it in the center of your menorah. Now we're gonna add the finishing touches. We're gonna add a bunch of little moons and stars and what I call skinkles. They're little asterisks all over our unicorn. I'm gonna start with my bright pink Posca marker. Looking good. That's kind of a star shape. I'll show you a skinkle next This is what I call a skinkle. Skinkle was a term that I learned from a teacher of mine. He had worked in Detroit in the '50s drawing cars for advertisements and the little glimmer that they would draw on the side of a car was called a skinkle. That's where I got the term from. My skinkle is slightly different than his, but the term just stuck with me in my head. That's a moon, which for Hanukkah, it's eight nights, so it's nice to have like a moon, a moon icon. These are just blobs. The moons and stars are for the idea of eight nights. And you just wanna create some visual play with the different colors. You can start to see how the colors play off of each other. Oh, it looks like a happy little unicorn ready to celebrate Hanukah. So we're gonna put our unicorn over here to dry. And next, we get to create the candles. There are eight nights of Hanukkah and the candle that we use to light those

eight candles is called the shamash. So we need nine candles in total. Let's see if I can count, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, and nine. And the shamash or the the worker candle, the candle that lights all the other candles is going to be the horn of the unicorn and that one is going to be completely yellow, since it lights all the other candles. So we're just gonna paint it fully yellow. And then we can also remember that that is our shamash. And then for the rest of our candles, just kind of line 'em up, get our white paint. So if you pretend these are candles, they would be lit on the top. So we're creating the white part as the candle and the tops will be yellow. The thing that's fun about this project is that anybody can use this menorah. They won't burn themselves, and you also don't have to be afraid of walking away from this menorah and having the candles melt down and burn a table, which has happened in our house before. So be careful when you're lighting things and letting them melt. So we've got our candles painted and now we will paint the flames. And I'm trying to paint them as evenly as possible, but candles don't burn evenly so it's okay for them to be uneven. You wanna let everything dry before you assemble. I'm gonna use some heat again. So take the first notch and put it, these should slide together pretty nicely. They might be a little sticky from the painting that you've done. Same with the next. All right, now we're ready for some candles. I'm just gonna put the first one on our unicorn, our shamash. It might fall because it's not balanced quite yet. And then for each night of Hanukkah, you can put on a candle. This will surely make your Hanukkah bright.

Gift tags, ornaments, and more

- This project is super versatile. We're gonna be cutting and painting holiday symbols, and you can use them as gift tags, ornaments, decorations, and even as gifts. I'm gonna walk you through five symbols, but I wanna show you that in your PDF, you have a lot of options. You've got Hanukkah specific symbols. You've got symbols that can be used for any holiday. And then you've got symbols that are Christmas specific. We are going to start with our any holiday cat. You can use it for any holiday, depending on what color you apply, first cut out your template. It's a little curvy, so you might need to take your time, take your cereal box and trace your cat. Make sure to save your templates because you might wanna make another cat on another day. I just put mine in an envelope and then I have them for a rainy day. The first thing I do is cut close to the template line, and now I'll follow the line that I created. Sometimes it's helpful here to just cut off that extra piece of cardboard as you get into these really tight areas. See how I move the cardboard with the scissors? Also, I find it helpful when I'm cutting something this size to be using scissors that match the size of what I'm cutting. If you use really big scissors, it might make it harder to get into the tighter curves. Now, ready to draw the face of the cat and the sweater. Your lines don't need to be perfect. The imperfections are kind of fun. It makes it look like a knit sweater. But you do wanna end on the paws here. There we go. Okay, now we're gonna start painting. I've got my scrap piece of paper to protect the table. I'm gonna make Hanuk-cat, so I'm gonna use my white and blue palette. If I wanted to do Cat-mas then I would do a red and green sweater. So I need a little bit more white for my kitty fur. I'm gonna grab my medium brush, and I'm gonna start with the hardest part, which is painting around the eyes. Looks like our cat's wearing a little mask right now. It's going out to play in the snow. It's wearing a snow mask. All right, and I'm gonna paint the rest of the fur, which is the tail. We made our mark here for the sweater, so it ends there, right here. And then the paws next up is the sweater, which I'm gonna use my two blues. I've got a little blue on the palette. I'm gonna use my dark blue and my lighter blue. I love these acrylic craft paints. I give them a little shake, so they mix inside the bottle, they're easy to use, and they go on really smoothly, especially

on the cereal box. So we're gonna do the light blue every other stripe, and if you were doing red and green, you would do your red, every other stripe and your green every other stripe. It's a chunky sweater. I like a nice chunky holiday sweater. Now we're going in with a dark blue. If you don't feel comfortable going in with the paint wet like I am, you can let your paint dry first between stripes. I've been painting for a long time, so I know the feeling of the paint when it's wet and how it's gonna work together. Sometimes that is uncomfortable for people, and that's okay. Now I am gonna dry it off because I wanna show you the face, and I don't wanna start smearing everything with my hand. I'm gonna grab my thin pen, can see about the size of it there, and it looks a wet, a little wet now, so I'm gonna be very careful. I can see where I drew my nose and my mouth, and I'm gonna go over my eyes with my pen. And there we have it. Your first holiday gift tag or gift card or ornament is complete, for the next couple. I've already cut them out. So let's get started. We're gonna start with a hand. I'd like you to look at your own hand. It's what makes you, you. We all have different set of lines and create the bottom of your hand here. And then as you look at your hand, draw the lines. So I've got a line here, I've got a line here. I've got one by my thumb. I've got some up by my fingers. And yours will be different than mine. Got some more up here. Those might be the same. We'll have some that are the same and some that are different. And let's see, I've got this other one right here is kind of cool. So first I want you to draw those in. Got one on my thumb too. And then we're going to paint in those colors. So for the hand, I'm gonna use some pink. I suggest for this symbol, since it's your hand that you pick your favorite colors. I'm gonna stick with the holiday theme and use the blues, but I'm gonna add my favorite pink. And I'm gonna add a light pink as well. Okay, put some paper underneath there. Just gonna start adding some colors. The hand can be many things. You can give somebody a helping hand, or you can be saying hello or high five. In some cultures, it means peace it has a lot of different meanings. And for the holidays, if you're thinking of giving somebody special gift, you can give them a little piece of yourself, a little hand portrait, a little helping hand. There is a very special version of my hand. Sometimes I like to keep parts of the cardboard showing through, but you can do whatever you'd like with the color. Now we get to make a menorah. We've cut the template out of our cereal box, and we're gonna flip it over so it looks like a rainbow. And draw four arcs starting in the middle with a small one. One. Try to make them as even as possible. Two, three, and four. Then we flip it over. We have our menorah. Here's my handy dandy paper to keep my table clean. And I'm gonna get my medium brush, and I'm gonna put some yellow on the outside, some gold, and you can pick whatever colors you want. I actually approach this thinking about Hanukkah colors and also about a rainbow because it felt like a rainbow. And then it might be easier now that I'm looking at it to flip it upside down, keep my hands a little bit cleaner. So I'm gonna flip it like this, boop, just to keep my hands clean, working from the top to the bottom. So next I'm gonna go to the bright pink, and then to our light pink. I love the color pink, so I try to bring it into any palette that I can. And next we're gonna go to some blue. And finally, the center of our menorah for the worker candle, which is called the shamash had a little bit too much water on my brush. That's why I wiped it off there. Didn't want it bleeding everywhere, and our menorah is complete. Another way to use the template for the menorah is to make a kinara for Kwanzaa. You can use the same template. You just need to draw it out and paint it slightly differently. You can use the exact same cutting and painting techniques to make everything else in your PDF templates. Oh, familiar face. Here we have Hanuk-cat as a gift tag, hole punched and strung around homemade gift wrap. Check out the other fun gift tags, a little dreidel and a star. I made my own gift wrap, and you can too. I upcycled a paper bag, cut it open and added paint dots and dashes. We're gonna look at a couple more gift tags for Hanukkah. You've got

numbers one through eight, so you can keep all of your gifts organized for each night. We also have a little gingerbread person and some magical mushrooms, and you'll notice that there are strings on some of these. You can use them as ornaments. You can also send a card, as we talked about before, one of my favorite projects is making mobiles. This is where you get to mix and match all of your fun symbols to make a special mobile. You can hang this on a tree as a really long ornament, or you can put it on the mantle. You can hang it on a wall, or you can send it as a gift. Here you'll see the two different cats and their colors that we talked about earlier. Here I took the house template. I added eyes to one and a little snowy roof. And the other, I just kept really simple. From the unicorn menorah to the holiday symbols, there's so much opportunity for you to create treasures for your family and for others. Wishing you a very warm holiday season.