

Get Creative

In the previous articles we looked at the main raw materials for making cards, but they would be boring if we just used plain card with printed items on them.

There are many techniques used by crafters to 'jazz up' cards and I will attempt to describe a few of them.

Peel Offs

These are die-cut shapes or pictures and even letters or numbers that have an adhesive layer, attached to a waxed paper backing. These can be carefully removed from the backing paper using either the 'Pokey Tool' or a pair of tweezers.

Rub-On's

These are thin plastic pictures or designs that have been deposited onto the back of a clear plastic sheet. To remove them from the sheet you must position the design on the card where you wish the design to go, using a blunt instrument such as the edge of a coin or a bone folder tool rub over the design completely and the design will be deposited onto the card. This system was originally developed by Letraset for the graphic design and drafting profession.

Matting and Layering

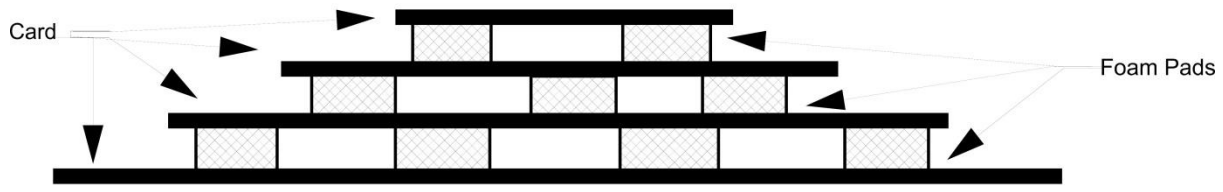
This is by far the most common method used by card makers. Usually it is a two layer design, with the backing card quite often being a piece of Mirror card and the top layer can be a picture or a sentiment (I will explain this term later). The mirror card and the top layer are glued using either sticky dots or double sided tape.

Sentiments

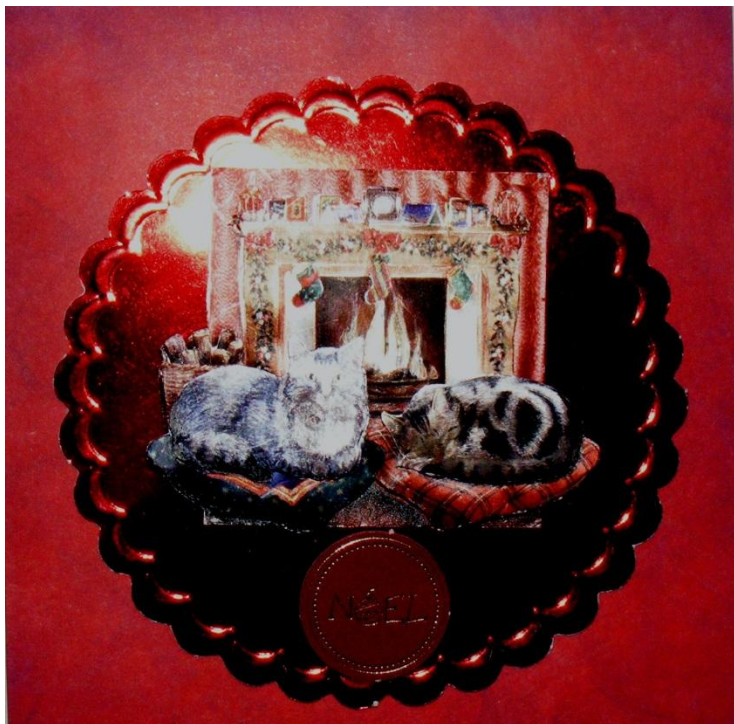
There are numerous manufactures that produce die-cut shapes with sentiments such as Happy Birthday, Get Well etc. You should be able to pick these up in HobbyCraft or any good card making shop. Kanban and Hunkydory make excellent products available from Create and Craft and good craft shops.

Decoupage

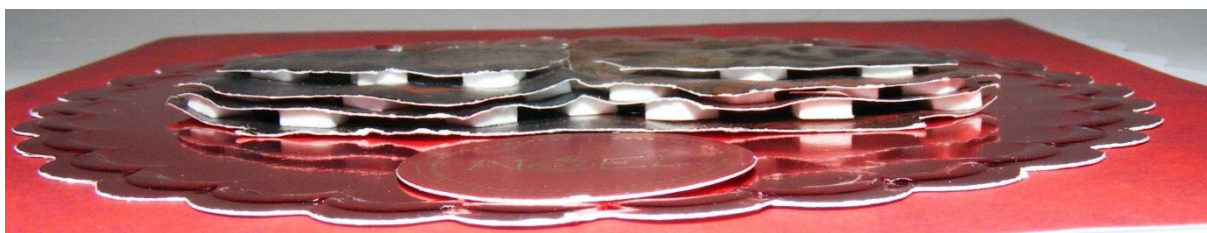
The use of this method of layering has grown in popularity over the past few years. It gives a card a 3D effect by accentuating parts of the picture by giving distance between the nearer image and the background. Usually the design is 3 or more layers deep and is spaced apart with sticky foam pads. There are other forms of this method, such as **Pyramage**, in which the picture builds up to a point in the centre and **Invertage**, where the top layer shows the outer regions of the picture going to a point in the centre.



Representation of a 4 layer Decoupage



A Christmas card made using Decoupage, with a view showing the layers





Example of Pyramage.

5 layers shown, the back picture being the full image and the other layers being cut as shown.

A4 sheets with separate images for each layer are available.

Stamping

This method is as popular as the Matting and Layering technique. Originally stamps were only made of rubber and mounted on wooden blocks. Today although you can still get this type of stamp a new type usually made of clear flexible plastic with self-adhesive sticky back are more popular. The advantage of this type is that you have a better view of where you are placing the stamp, when you use an acrylic block or 'Rocker Block'. When applying ink to the stamp, turn the stamp with the stamping surface uppermost and dab the ink on with the ink pad. Most ink pads made for card making have the pad surface proud of the container, so it is possible to use this method of application. Using this method it is also possible to apply different coloured inks to different areas of the stamp. When the ink has dried you may colour in the stamped images to your desired colour scheme, using either water colours, water colour pencils or marker pens, such as Sakura or Letraset Pro Markers. These are available from craft stores and online.

Embossing and Stencilling

Embossing is the process of indenting the card to make the surface either stand out proud or indent inwards. The simplest way of doing this is to purchase an embossing stencil. Attach this stencil to the card in the position you require it and

hold in place with low tack tape. Using an embossing tool of a suitable diameter follow the stencil lines to form the pattern. The tip diameter varies according to the stencil outline thickness. A multi-purpose tool shown below illustrates the tool stylus, but other types are available.

Parchment (Pergamano) and Paper pricking

The art of parchment pricking or Pergamano is a form of embossing and pricking techniques and exploited by the company that distributes the tools, stencils and parchment. This can be expensive as you will need special tools, templates and the parchment is quite expensive. It is a combination of embossing and pricking to form lacey like patterns, which look very effective. They can be done freehand, but this needs a great deal of skill. Vellum can also be used but it is not as effective as parchment.

