let there be love
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Let There be Love
& MINI-JOURNALS

BY TINA WALKER

My love for all things miniature started with scrapbook mini-albums. These albums often highlighted a special event or featured family and friends. They were created with patterned papers and embellishments, but scrapbooking eventually evolved into mixed-media, and my mini-makings turned into journals and books. There is just something about the condensed size of a mini-book that is filled with fragments of projects past and bursting with tiny details.

My journals usually contain the same ingredients: fabric scraps, handstitching, eco-dyed papers, and small vintage trimmings. When the mini-journal bug strikes, I pull out my bag of scraps and escape into mini-heaven. The journaling creative process is tolerant and forgiving. If it feels right with your soul, it is meant to be. ▸

SUPPLIES

- Antiquing medium: (DecoArt)
- Decorative tape*
- Eco-dyed paper
- Embellishments*
- Embroidery floss: (DMC)
- Fabric scraps
- Ink: (Ranger - Distress)*
- Jewelry findings*
- Lace
- Metal stamps: alphabet*
- Scrap metal
- Stencils: (StencilGirl)

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The base of my mini-book is eco-dyed papers and fabrics. I keep a huge stash of these materials at the ready for when inspiration strikes. Several of the eco-dyed papers include stenciling with ink for a layered effect. I often dig into my bag of scraps looking for bits and bobs that catch my eye, and create a small inspiration pile. During the design phase of mini-journal creation, my studio desk resembles a beautiful trash bin full of random, unexpected pieces. As they say, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

I usually work on several pages at one time, all in various stages of completion. The entire book will only be assembled after all of the individual pages are complete. Many times, I will adhere two pages together so I can add stitching to a page without it appearing on the reverse side. But this journal also includes stitching incorporated into both sides of one page; it requires some pre-planning, but the result is worth the effort.

One of my favorite techniques is the modest element of handstitching. There is something about this process that is calming, serene, and full of memories of simpler times. Stitching can serve a structural function or it can be purely for inspiration. Depending on the desired effect, stitching can be done in either contrasting (bold) or complementary (subtle) colors. The stitch doesn't have to be a complicated one; you can see in my book that I often use straight stitches, a beautiful way to add that handmade touch.

I am a self-pronounced antique junk addict. My purchases are frequently vintage lace and buttons, as well as items that you wouldn't normally associate with journals, such as watch faces, snaps, and antique sewing-needle casings. These bits add a mysterious element of stories untold. What do you spy in my mini-book? Perhaps remnants of chipboard letters, washers, antique hairpins, jewelry charms, clips, and natural found objects like metal and wood. ▸

My favorite elements of mini-journals are the layers of fabric and lace. I love to combine different types of fabrics, allowing the tiniest of fibers to peek through the layers. It makes you want to pick up the book and look closely at each page. It always amazes me how you can transform an uninteresting bit of fabric into something extraordinary.

The binding used on this project was a technique I learned from Seth Apter: cut individual strips of paper cut to the height of the book and approximately ½ inch wide. Fold each strip in half lengthwise and glue them together to create the spine. The finished binding without the pages will look like a super skinny book. Each flap is used as an area on which to glue each completed page. It can also serve as a decorative accent. Another wonderful reason I love to use this binding is that you can make your mini-books as small or large as you want. The size is only limited by the number of spine strips you glue together.

My minis are meant to be held, discovered, and explored. How amazing would touch-a-vision technology be? You could turn each page, touching the softness of the fabric, the texture of the stitching, and the nonconformity of each embellishment. It would transform how and what we create.

Tina Walker is a frequent contributor to various Stampington & Company publications. She is a paper crafter, mixed-media artist, and DIY maker. You can see more of her designs and work on her blog, *adogslife-thirteen.blogspot.com*, or her Society6 storefront, *society6.com/adogslife13*.

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