

## Blandford Art Society November 2020 home project: Making Christmas Cards



Card by Jill Marsden, watercolour and gouache

At the November BAS meeting, we were planning to make Christmas cards with BAS members sharing their ideas and techniques. With Covid 19 restrictions keeping us at home, it's now this month's home project. I know you may think it's too soon to plan for Christmas but it really is just a few weeks away!

### Getting ideas

It's good to do a little research before you get started. If you've kept last year's cards, get them out and have a look through. Are there any professional designs you could simplify? Did your artist friends send you some beautiful creations or maybe, some cards would be suitable for collage? Alternatively, you could look online for ideas

- *Love from the artist* is a website for artists to sell their cards and has a range of artistic styles. You may notice some local artists e.g. Alison Board has beautiful cards of holly, mistletoe, reindeer and poinsettia. Do a search for Christmas cards and see the amazing large range.

<https://www.lovefromtheartist.com>

- Look on a website such as Pinterest. Plenty of unusual designs.  
<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/lynnettewalczak/christmas-cards/>
- If you're an SAA member, the November 2020 Paint magazine has an article about making Christmas cards by Alison Board. I've kept an article from the November 2017 Paint magazine by Ali Hargreaves. Art magazine hoarders might look out Nov/Dec editions!



Card by Judith Ryde

## Materials

*Card or Paper:* You can buy packs of blank ready-made cards with envelopes eg Frisks white card 50 pack £6.99 or Bockingford watercolour paper 10 cards for £8.52 on the SAA website [www.saa.co.uk](http://www.saa.co.uk). The Range do a wide variety of card packs too, <https://www.therange.co.uk>. Alternatively, you can make your own with A4 or A5 card and a pack of envelopes. Choose a reasonably thick card at least 180 gms and you don't need to stick to white, packs of coloured card are easily available at stationery or craft shops and online.

You can paint or draw directly on the card, but doing the design on a separate piece of paper, then sticking it on the card works well. If you're going to use collage, collect some suitable materials such as old paintings, colour experiments, old cards or wrapping paper. You may want to add some glitter or sparkle too.

*Paint:* As well as your usual colours, there's a range of gold, silver or pearlescent paints and inks available. I have a lovely gold acrylic paint made by Schminke. They also make a product range called 'Bronze Aqua' which is a metallic powder you sprinkle onto wet paint and it creates a lovely sheen: available in gold, silver or bronze on SAA and Amazon websites. Although they are expensive, a small bottle will last for years as you only need a tiny amount! You can paint or draw directly on the card, but doing the design on a separate piece of paper, then sticking it on the card works well.

*Glue and adhesive:* You can use PVA glue, Bindex acrylic binder, Pritt stick etc. for collage. I find Matt medium is useful for the lightest touches such as attaching thread

or sequins as it's invisible when dry. In my experiments, I've found all these glues have a significant water content so when dry, the card surface buckles. So, consider using double sided tape or a non-water based glue such as Fixogum. The magic of Fixogum is when dry, you can rub off any excess gum that shows! A pair of tweezers is handy when gluing tiny pieces on to the cards.

*Scissors or scalpel:* Collage is a good option for cards so you'll need some scissors or a scalpel for cutting out.

## Making the cards

### 1. Printed cards

You may already have a good painting you'd like to use for this year's Christmas card. If not, try painting a seasonal subject. The painting will need to be carefully photographed. I suggest you put the painting on the floor in a brightly light room but not in direct sunshine. Alternatively, photograph outside on a bright cloudy day. Stand above the painting, almost fill the screen and make sure the camera is held horizontal: line up 2 edges of the painting with 2 sides of the camera view or grid to achieve this. Take several shots and review if possible on your computer. Check required size and aspect (portrait, landscape or square) for the picture on the card. You should be able to crop to a suitable size on your computer. It's worth printing the photo at home to check it looks reasonable before committing to making lots of cards. Local printers will often make cards or you can use an online website such as Moo or Vistaprint.

### 2. Collage cards



Collage Card by Tess Thomas.



Cards by Kathe Holt



Gather together some suitable collage material or paint some paper scraps with bright seasonal colours. I'm into recycling so I've used the backs of envelopes and old packing paper as well as old paintings. Draw some shapes that remind you of Christmas and do a few trial designs on paper. I like to make some shape templates and use these to draw around on the reverse side before cutting out. But you can just cut out shapes and then arrange like Tess did in the example above. Think about using both the shape itself and the remaining cut out shape. Kathe used strips of wrapping paper & cards.

If you are glueing the collage, I recommend PVA glue with a foam roller and tray. Have a pile of newspaper sheets, place the item on the newspaper and roll with the glue. Fold the newspaper over to hide the sticky places and use the non-sticky surface for the next item. Then, throw the used newspaper in the bin. Otherwise, the glue gets everywhere including your card and spoils its appearance.

3. *Printing designs with stencils or other materials*



Woodland scene by Jill Marsden

I have little experience in making cards by printing. But, Jill explains she made this card using a stencil and acrylic ink with Jel Print.



Monoprint card by Heather MacGregor

Heather separately mixed 2 acrylic paints with some flow medium and rolled them on to a piece of acetate with a rubber roller. She laid a few leaves on top of the paint on the acetate, then pressed a piece of paper on and gently rubbed all over with her palm. When it was dry, she put some paint directly on a leaf and used it as a 'stamp'. If you use reasonably large piece of acetate

and paper, you can cut the final monoprint up to make several cards. Use your imagination with colours and stencils eg paper doilies, lace, string etc.

4. A design idea inspired RA artist



On line II, 2013 Vanessa Jackson RA

I saw an exhibition of Vanessa Jackson's prints and loved the simplicity of her designs (<http://www.vanessajackson.co.uk/work.php?c=Prints>). Whilst her prints were not connected to Christmas, I think they make a great style for Christmas cards.



Here's a page of my sketches with some potential ideas. The letters refer to the paint colour I was trying out eg QG quinacridone gold, BM brown madder.

**Wendy's Christmas Card Experiments**  
Collage pieces glued to the paper



Recycled envelopes



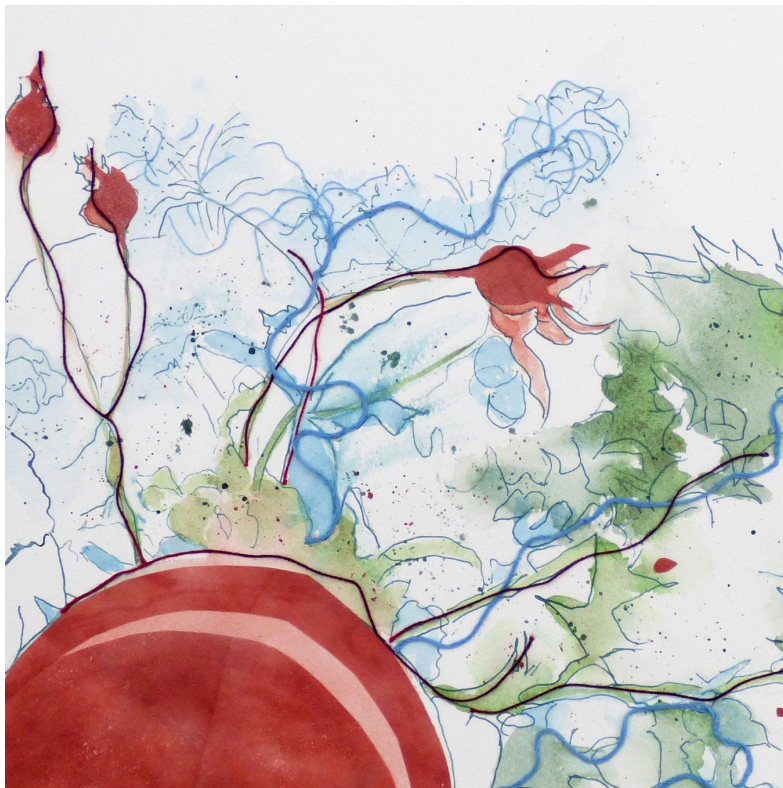
Packing paper crumpled,  
flattened & painted with gold paint



For these 3 cards, I stitched the collage pieces to the paper.



Christmas decorations by Kathe Holt



Rose hips and holly by Wendy Jump