
Iris Fold Card with Jody Alexander

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- The Iris fold technique is a traditional craft that originated in Holland. Originally, the insides of security envelopes and those great patterns were used, and I love that idea of upcycling. We'll be making it into a card, finish it off on a paper frame, and I'll also show you some other examples of different projects you can do with your creation.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- These are the tools and materials that you'll need for the Iris fold technique. You're gonna need a straight edge ruler for measuring. A cutting tool. A pencil. You may need a bone folder. You can really get away without one for this project, but something to help you fold. Scissors. Lots of tape. Tape is what's gonna hold everything together, so you want a good roll of tape. You may want a piece of sandpaper just kinda to clean up inside of your frame if your cutting wasn't just perfect. I know mine never is. A triangle is always nice when you're trying to square up edges. You're gonna wanna download and print out some templates that we've made for you. Four different shapes. The oval. The square. The triangle. And a circle. And you know you can print these out and make them bigger or smaller if you want. That's fine, whatever you want for your design. You're gonna want a couple pieces of card stock paper... for the frame and for the card. Again, I'm gonna show you a couple of the samples that we have. There's the oval and remember you can orient it that way. That's what I'm gonna be doing for the demonstration. Here's the circle. Little bigger. I used variations of black security envelopes and then I used some, I think, Japanese yellow pages in here, but they're white. Now let's talk about the papers you'll be using for folding and creating the Iris design. Security envelopes are my absolute favorite. They're free. It's up-cycling. They come in such a wide variety of patterns. I just keep finding more and more. My friends have started collecting interesting designs for me. They're really fun. So start looking out for those and that's what we'll be using for the demonstration. You don't have to limit yourself to that though. So many things will work. Book pages work beautifully. These are shorthand pages that are a real interesting design if you fold them just right. Text, you can get text in there with book pages. Scores, or music, work really nice. You can get some color in there with maps. These are old topographical maps. Look at all those beautiful lines and colors. That could be really interesting. I have a little collection of graph papers that are really thin, but I think they would work really nice for a nice orange. Green, brown, and then I've got some... ledger paper here. Also what works well is origami paper and wrapping paper. And any paper that's a similar weight to the security envelopes. That can be kind of a gauging point for you. You will want a photograph to put inside of your frame. I love using vintage photographs 'cause I have a small collection of them. That's really fun. You can also find a drawing from an old dictionary, or a book, or maybe a little drawing you've made, or even a pattern. You could continue the pattern into the framed area. Glue is nice to secure down... your Iris fold design before you sew, if you're going to sew. That's a little bit optional. PVA glue, glue stick you can also use. A glue brush if you're gonna do that. You can see from my sample here, that I've machine stitched around here, so if you're wanting to do that, you'll need a sewing machine. That's totally optional though. But you can also do a hand stitch. This is just hand stitched. So any kind of thread,

absolutely any kind of thread would work really nicely for that. That's all you'll need for the Iris fold technique.

Chapter 3 - Creating Folds

Choose and Prep Materials

- First you'll wanna prepare your materials. Print out two copies of the template that you wanna use. I'm gonna use the oval, so I've printed out two copies of it. One we're gonna put aside for now. The other one I'm gonna cut out with my scissors. I'm gonna cut out this outer shape. As accurately as you can, just using scissors. I'm going on the outside of this black line. And we're gonna use this as the template for our frame. And then it's something you can save, and use later. So really you only need to do it for this first time. All right. Need to clean up just a little bit, 'cause we're gonna draw around this. We want this to be as accurate as possible. And that looks pretty good. You need your pencil. And you need a ... For this exact card that I'm gonna do, if you wanna use the exact sizes that I'm using, this is four by five card stock material. Decide what side you think you're gonna use. I think this is gonna be my back side. Center, well I'm gonna orient it this way, so let's look at it this way. Might weight it a little bit on the bottom, or I could center it exactly. You can measure, or you can just kind of eyeball it. I like to just see what looks good to me. You wanna make sure your rectangle, if that's the shape you have, though, is parallel to that line. This is looking okay. I'm gonna take my pencil, and trace around my oval. And don't worry if you're a little messy here, this is the underside of the card that's gonna be completely buried. So if you just kinda wanna do a loose sketch, it doesn't have to be a real hard line, just as long as you know where that inner line is. Let's see if ... It's looking okay. Not a real solid line, but it's good enough for me to start cutting. I could use this cutting tool, but I have a scalpel that's really accurate, and really sharp. And it's also very comfortable in my hand. So this kind of precision cutting is perfect for this tool. So you do wanna be as precise as you can in cutting a curve like this. Just go slow. Go slow. And keep your fingers out of the way. (laughs) Out of the line of that blade. And just take it slow, you can see how I'm just inching. Find a cutting tool that's really comfortable in your hand. If things do get a little messy in here, that's where a nice little piece of sandpaper can come in handy, and you can clean up the lines a little bit. (hums) A few fibers hanging on here somewhere, there we go. All right. That lifts out. I can see I could clean up a little bit there. Let's look at it from this side. Everything's looking pretty good there. That I could come in a little bit on. I could either use my knife, but it seems like whenever I do that it ends up not looking really great. So you can use your sandpaper to kind of, just take that curve down. And sweep. All right, I think that's looking pretty good. You also now have this cutout, that you can save and use in another project. Or it can be your template for next time. It's a little thicker. So you've got these that can be reused. I never throw them away. The frame is complete, so let's move on and start preparing our security envelopes for the Iris Fold. Let's take another look at our template. So we know what sizes we need of strips that we're gonna be folding. You can see over here that I've already prepared three different designs. We need four. You can see A. All of these A's mark one pattern, one color. And then B is a second pattern, or color. C is a third, and then D is a fourth. Also note that you need five of each, one, two, three, four, five. And the length and the width I always cut the biggest, and then tear down while I'm working. So measure, at this point. Find the longest one. I think this is the longest line that I see, right here. And this is just shy of two and a quarter. But I like to make my pieces longer, so I have room to work with. So I'm going to cut, or tear them, about three or four inches in length. It doesn't have to be really exact at this point. As far as the width, I think this inner one is the largest one I'm seeing. And that's about,

maybe three eighths of an inch. And then you wanna double that, 'cause we're gonna fold it, remember Iris Fold, so we're gonna fold these. I'm gonna make them about between three quarters and one inch in width. And again, it doesn't have to be really exact. So those are the measurements that I'm gonna prepare. Here's an envelope, that I'm gonna use. Tear it apart. Probably won't use that area. Remember you don't have to be really exact right now. This is pretty forgiving, because the frame hides a lot. So you don't have to be super exact with things. So I'm just gonna give this a cut. I'm gonna cut off this end too, 'cause it's all glued up, and that's not gonna be very usable. I'll cut my length first, so let's do four inches. So you can see I'm not even marking. I'm just gonna kinda go for it. Four inches is about there. Again, I'm gonna be tearing these down later. Now my width, I want my width to be a little more exact. So I'm gonna make a few marks at maybe three quarters of an inch. There's one at three quarter. Another at three quarter. Then another. And a last one at three quarter. Then I do it also from here. Just two marks again, doesn't have to be super perfect. And that one's a little smaller. But we have extra. We also have extra envelopes, so we should have plenty. Cut your strips. And this last one's a little thin. I'm gonna go ahead and cut it, and leave that white there, because remember we're gonna fold this. So that could be just underneath. So I think I'm gonna be fine with this. But I need five. There's one, two, three, four. We'll need one more. I'm gonna use this, it'll be shorter. But looking at the template, and this is so you know that everything doesn't have to be super exact, these guys are so short, I don't really need four inches for every single one. So I'm gonna cut us one more strip. I might make it a little fatter, even, and shorter. And that'll be our fifth piece, and that'll be all we'll need. I'm just gonna leave that white on there, 'cause we'll rip it off before we use it. Now we have our four different patterns cut out. And laid out, but we wanna make sure this is the order that we want for our Iris Fold. You can see what's gonna be adjacent to what, and maybe you don't want similar blues right next to each other, maybe you want 'em opposite. So this is the time where you wanna arrange them here. I think I like it pretty well. I might just switch out this one for this. I also think about the patterns. And I don't want maybe two plaids or crosshatches next to each other. But I've got some nice variations there. My design is laid out, I like the colors, I like what's next to each other. So now we're ready to make our Iris Fold design.

Chapter 4 - Create the Card

Creating Iris fold

- My materials are arranged, and I'm ready to start making the Iris fold design. Taking my frame, placing it over my template. You can see I've cut a little bit outside of the lines, but that's okay as long as I fill in my frame. I'm gonna take a little piece of tape and tape it down. This side that's up is gonna be underneath, so you wanna make sure that the other side is the side that you like the best of the paper or whatever material you're using, and that's what's gonna show. So, I'm taping this down. This is all going to be covered up eventually. I'm gonna start with A, so I'll take from pile A. One strip, gonna fold it. I just fold these as I go along, and then I'm gonna see how big this is, how big I need. You wanna leave about a quarter-of-an-inch to half-an-inch on each side. So, I'm gonna cut this down, and I just rip them, and I just make sure I have enough room to tape it down. A piece of tape. Just small pieces of tape. You want everything to fit on this frame. You don't want anything sticking out. So, that is something that you need to take into consideration when making this frame. You want ample room. You don't want it really tight so that you don't have working room here. Just a little piece of tape. There we've got A, our first A, down. I'm gonna take from pile B now. Fold it. Let's see how long it really needs to be. Tear it. That's gonna fit fine. So, you can see we're just

fitting it right into that space, that first space within that line. Taping it down. Just a little piece of tape. This is gonna start looking really messy with the tape and the piles of your Iris fold design on the back side, but don't worry. It is gonna look beautiful once you turn it over. So, we'll keep working a little more, and then we'll take a little peek to see how it looks. We're gonna pull from pile C now. Fold it. Let's check the size that we need. Rip it. Now, this is such a disposable material, too, these envelopes that, you know, if you mess up, you know that you always have more, so don't worry about it. If you don't cut the right size, just get another piece. Okay. Tape that down. And now we want D. Let's take a peek to just see how things are progressing. Oh, look how pretty that looks. Quite a difference from the other side, but it's starting to shape up. So, that's our first round, our first go-around. We've got all four patterns in there, so we're ready to start lap two. So again, I'm gonna start here. I'm gonna pull from pile A, fold, check the size 'cause each one is a different size. Each go-around is a little different as our Iris comes into the center. And see why we need a lot of tape? Remember, just little pieces of tape 'cause you don't want too much bulk in there either. All you need is a real small piece. Pile B. Let's take from pile C. And we'll do D. Alright, that was our second go-around. Let's see how it's shaping up. It's starting to look really nice, and those folds are gonna start moving around a little bit. Continue taking your pieces of paper, folding, and taping down all five rounds until you get to the middle. I'm on my last one. Tear that down. Now for this design, you have a rectangle in the middle. So, you do want to pay a little attention to the lines being square. I don't use my triangle or anything, but I just try to be a little bit aware of that in this last go-around. A little bit more accuracy. And the other ones. Alright, let's take a look and see how it looks. Beautiful. Take it off the template. Remove this piece of tape. Just get rid of that. This is ready to attach to my card.

Attaching the photo

- This is the fun part where we're gonna affix the photo and attach it to the card. This is the photo that I'm gonna use, a vintage photograph of horses. What's really fun about Iris fold for me is when this is finished, and my framed area is rather small, and for some other patterns, the frame, or the opening is even smaller. So, you have to decide what is your photo, and look at how different it looks by moving this around. So, I really like that post and that first horse, but I wanna get a little bit of the horizon in, too. So, I think I'm gonna place it down like that. So, I just need to affix it to the other side. So, I'm gonna pick that up. I wanna make sure I have enough room though to really get it secure on there. I'll hold it. Flip it. I'm just gonna put a little piece of tape down so that I can move it if I didn't get it just right. I can move it. Let's see how I, and you see that's not centered on there because that's not, that's not the image I want to use, so there we go. I like the way this looks, but I wanna give it one more piece of tape to really affix that photo down there. If you're using an image from a book, you can use glue. I'm a little shy of using glue on old photos, so just a little piece of tape will hold it down. Things are looking pretty messy in there, but that's okay. You're not gonna see it. It's all gonna be turned over and affixed to your card. That's looking really beautiful. I'm very happy with it. This is my card, which is six inches by 10 inches. A cardstock. It's the same paper as this, just a different color. I already have it cut. I'm gonna fold it. This is where you might wanna use a bone folder. Really the only time you need it. You wanna bone it down. Now, we can affix the card. First, I'm gonna play around with it a little bit, and I'm gonna leave a little weighting on the bottom. I think that always looks kind of nice. And when I do this, I'm gonna just make a couple little marks so that when there's glue on the back of this, I'm not having to move it around. I just make a little mark in that corner and then another mark in the opposite corner, and then you'll be sure to get it in place

that way. Just a little mark there, a little mark there. I'm gonna get some PVA glue on the back here, and this is your choice whether, you could just glue this whole area up, and then you can be sure that if this tape starts coming undone, that everything in here is gonna be nice and secure. Or you can just do a few dabs of glue, which is what I'm gonna do 'cause I'm gonna run it through the sewing machine. So, just a little bit of PVA we're gonna use. It's a straight PVA, which dries fairly quickly. Just a little dab really. I'm even gonna try to get it in places that I don't think I'm gonna sew because I don't want my sewing machine going through the glue. If your glue is really perfectly dry, you'll probably be okay, but I'm gonna be working pretty quickly here. That's probably enough to fix it down. You could even put just a little bit in the back of the photo. Just a tiny bit. Even though that's a photo, I'm hardly adding any moisture there at all. Alright, make sure you've got it upright. See my card's opening like this. I'm gonna match up those little corner marks that I made, making sure everything looks pretty good. This is affixed now with just a little dab of glue. Now, I'm ready to use my sewing machine to really affix it to the card as I did in this sample. I'm gonna be doing something really similar to that. But remember, you can also do some hand-stitching. Here's my example of this. If you are gonna be doing hand-stitching with this paper or any kind of paper, I recommend pre-punching your paper with an awl. That's gonna make sewing a lot easier, and then really you can use any kind of thread, bookbinding thread, sewing thread, anything.

Decorative stitching

- I love to add stitching to my projects. It adds a lot of nice texture and dimension. Here's my sample again. And this is what I'm gonna do right now. I'm gonna show you how to do that with my little sewing machine, here. I'm probably gonna start out with doing the outer frame, and then this inner frame. Which, I just let myself go a little messy in there. Turn my sewing machine on. I'm gonna start with the lower right corner. Now you wanna make sure that your needle is nice and sharp. And, when you're sewing through paper it's very hard on the needle, so you want to change your needle often. So just be aware of that. All right, let's get going. (machine whirs) All right. I'm gonna cut it. I like to have loose threads, too. So. (scissors snip) I'm gonna do a different stitch for each line. (machine whirs) Okay, we're gonna have to curl our paper just a little bit there to fit it in here. That's the tricky part about sewing paper. (machine whirs) One more stitch, there. There we go. All right, so it's looking pretty good. Now I'm gonna stitch around the oval. I'm a little nervous about it because it's gotten so thick in here, so we'll see how my machine does. I might have to help her get going. I'm gonna start at the bottom, here. We'll see how we do. I might have to turn my wheel a little bit to help get her going. Okay. (machine whirs) And go around. (chuckles) Oop, got stuck there a little bit. Now, I don't worry about being too perfect here, I just go around, loop around. And I do a few go-arounds. And you can see, that first go-around was kind of messy looking, but we're going to keep going. And it's gonna look great, I just know it. (machine whirs) Come in on that corner. Okay, one more, third lap. Third lap is a charm. All right, it's going a little bit, okay. Trim my threads, nice and short. And in the back. All right, it's looking pretty good. You've got your card. The inside has the back of the sewing. Which, some people don't like that. I do, I like to just leave that like that, but you can always cover that up with a decorative piece of paper or something if you want. So my iris fold technique card is completed, ready to give away. If you decide you love it too much and you want to keep it, just make it so it's not a card anymore, it's ready to hang on the wall. Here's the sample that I've shown many times with a vertical orientation, but very similar to what we've done. Here's another example that I've shown you with a different pattern, a circle, hand-stitching, added some paint. I reused some old file folders that were really kind of funky and

fun. This one says CLUB ROOMS on it. No idea what that means, but I love reusing those little, little things that I found. Little found words, I like to call 'em. This is a fun little piece that I made recently. I was thinking of it as a Christmas ornament, or a holiday ornament, and this could really be a number of different things. You can see, I didn't use the security envelopes here, I used a little bit of book pages, music, the shorthand, and an image that I found from an old dictionary. And, oval shape, again, and with a blanket stitch all around it. Backed it with a piece of flannel. Added a ribbon, can be holiday ornament, or ready for the wall, or on a gift. To top a gift. So this one's really fun. Another card, another dog. (chuckles) Another oval, my favorite things. But again, old file folders. I really love using those, and you find them everywhere. Lastly, I wanna show you an artist's book of mine. This is part of a larger series of artist's books where I used this technique. So I'm hoping that will give you ideas to incorporate it into your artwork. Maybe your book art, or a collage. So there's so many applications for this. So this is a book where I took a lot of old book pages and pieced 'em together to make this bigger book. I used security envelopes, I used an old cookbook. And you can see, I used some vintage photos. And, on every page, I've got the iris fold in a different design with a different photo in the center. And you can see, there's other designs out there, too. And play around with your photos. I often like to focus on people's feet. (chuckles) It makes the photograph suddenly so much more interesting 'cause the focus is off of a person's face, it's really fun. Okay, that's the Queen was in the Kitchen. (chuckles)