ART AT HOME: *Tissue Paper Postcards*

~Regina A.E. Scudellari-Ponemon, Hospital Artist-In-Residence, Mount Sinai Downtown

As a cut paper artist I find working in tissue paper to be a basic and inexpensive introduction into the amazing world of cut paper. An excellent resource for the art form of cut paper: both contemporary and historical can be found at [https://papercutters.org/](https://papercutters.org/).

As both a cut paper artist and printmaker, the technique of layers and working from light to dark comes naturally and it is helpful to think of this technique in a similar fashion: build your tissue paper layers from background to foreground and from light to dark.

You may have several pieces in various stages of planning as you incorporate new negative shapes and it can get very “assembly line” in that sense: your negative shapes will be as valuable as the positive shapes. For your first few pieces, I would suggest using bold shapes and, as you get more comfortable with this medium, you can graduate to intricate shapes and cuts. I love and often use lots of symbols (like a heart) in my work and symbols can lend themselves to this medium, as they are often a simplification of a shape.

**Materials needed:**

- tissue paper,
- a substrate of your choosing (actual postcards / you can recycle an old one or purchase them with postage already applied at [https://store.usps.com/store/results/postcards/_/N-1h8f8jx-](https://store.usps.com/store/results/postcards/_/N-1h8f8jx-)
- cards/cardboard/watercolor paper)
- glitter glue
- scissors
- wide brush (for applying layers of glitter glue/glue evenly).
- razor blade or Exacto knife for intricate cuts along with a self-healing cutting board: if this is not available: cardboard can substitute as a safe surface to cut on. NOTE: this tool would not be suitable for children-even with supervision.
DIRECTIONS, (images follow)

1. Once you have created a layout in tissue paper, set the pieces aside. Add a generous and even application of glitter glue to your substrate. You may wish to use your widest brush for this first stage.

2. Carefully lay down your first layers of tissue paper taking care to place it where you want it: this is a fragile medium and replacement can often lead to rips and tears. Go with the flow as you can also patch tears with an additional layer of tissue paper in the same color which I have found adds both depth and visual interest.

3. At this point, the steps become repetitive: with each layer, add glue to both adhere the layer to the piece and also lay down enough glue for the next tissue paper layer. Some types of tissue paper bleed when wet with glue. Play with this as it can create a lovely watercolor effect.

4. Aside from the fact that using negative shapes is a great practice environmentally speaking, there is great creative value of using these scraps from punching or cutting. I find negative shapes to be an incredible opportunity artistically. I save almost all these open shapes for future use as it allows you to see differently and compose in new ways. Pictured is my collection of negative shapes generated from punched paper used in other projects. Challenge yourself to use these and you will create an entirely new level of art. The great thing about this medium is that it can be very forgiving and once your first layers have been added and the glue has completely dried, you can return to add onto your artwork days later.

7. Large scale works are not really very different from postcard size pieces- they simply require more planning. If you fall in love with this medium, expect to feel drawn to work large. The benefit of working on a bigger scale is that it will also allow you to work with more intricate cut paper shapes. You can also experiment with working 3D /mixed media as in the image with the two fish.

8. Attached are sketches for larger scale pieces along with a page from my sketchbook that incorporates handwritten text.

9. Finally- enjoy the gorgeous colors and sparkle!