



PATHWAYS TO WELLBEING

This week's Hermwork

is inspired by
'Garlanding the Herm'

THE
HOLBURNE
MUSEUM



Micro ivory carving: Garlanding the Herm, G Stephany and J Dresch, Ivory, about 1795

It's beautiful in its detail, the different levels of depth, and as an exercise in what you can do with just the one material, pure white and unadorned.

This level of virtuosity can only be reached by being fascinated with your medium (in this case ivory) ...experimenting with it, playing, pushing what it can do , making and learning from mistakes. And of course you need to know your subject too, and Stephany and Dresch must have spent a lot of time studying nature.

'This is all fascinating' I hear you cry, 'BUT WHAT IS THIS WEEKS TASK?'

For several VERY good reasons we aren't going to be working with ivory! Instead, we're going to be wringing as much creativity as we can from another plain, white, lovely (and much more elephant friendly) material - PAPER.

Shoehorning in some of the themes from this piece we're going to make a garland for ourselves. We'll skip the fertility part (makes me blush) - this is about making a jazzy bit of headwear to honour yourself and maybe bring yourself some luck! It's also about play, experimentation and pushing what you can do.

Garlands are traditionally made of flowers... yours doesn't have to be, but they're a good place to start...

Whattingthewhatnow?

I had to do some research on this one! In this scene we see some nymphs (female nature spirits from Greek mythology) placing garlands on a bust of the messenger god Hermes. Busts like this, known as 'Herms' could be found at boundaries, crossroads and outside houses, temples and places of importance as a kind of charm to offer protection and luck. They would also be honoured with oils and garlands to bring fertility, which is what is going on here. The scene seems to be on the cusp of winter and spring, so these nature spirits are hoping to assure a fruitful new year.

This tour de force of virtuoso miniature ivory carving was made in Bath by the celebrated G Stephany and J Dresch. Originally from Germany, the pair specialised in miniature carvings of breathtaking and scarcely believable intricacy. It is incredibly small and on display in the museum's Posnett gallery - come and see for yourself!



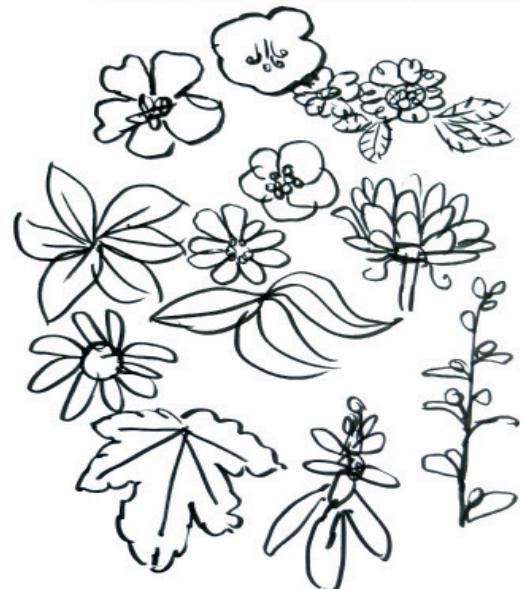
Artist's impression

So before we start making anything, I thoroughly recommend getting outside if you can and drawing some plants, leaves and flowers (of course there's the internet, books/magazines or Gardeners' World if you can't). Even weeds poking out of a crack in the wall can supply inspiration if you can't make it to Sydney Gardens!

Not only is this fun and relaxing (trust me), but I guarantee it'll give you some ideas. Look at how leaves and flowers are put together, the ways they bend, curl, fold, divide, overlap... the shapes they make, the parts they're made of. Don't spend too long on it, you only need quick sketches to get the ideas going!

Once you've done that I also recommend tearing up a bit of paper into medium sized chunks and just seeing what you can do with it my folding, pinching, curling, overlapping, rolling, tearing it.

Can you copy any of the things you saw in nature?



THE TASK PROPER

You'll need:

A4(ish) paper (Doesn't have to be fancy...copier paper, notepad paper, plain, lined - it doesn't matter, but you'll need probably at least 10 sheets)

Scissors (or craft knife if you prefer and have a cutting mat)

Paper clips or hairclips (useful for holding things together whilst you decide where to glue them!)

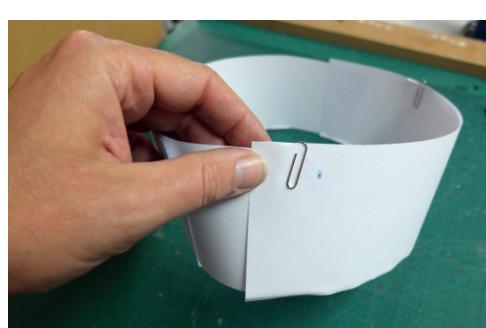
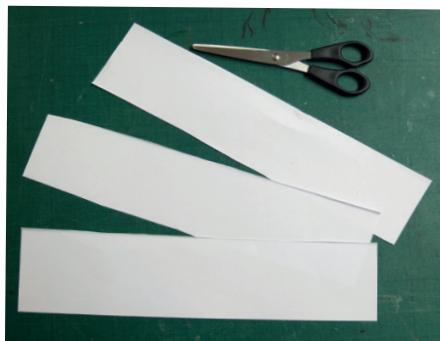
Glue (UHU is best, but you could also use PVA, Prittstick or doublesided tape)

A biro

A Twerdle stick (something like a cocktail or kebab stick to curl paper round - inside of a biro works fine too)

STEP 1: MAKE YOUR GARLAND BASE

You need to be methodical about this bit. Try to avoid excess glue oozing out from joins etc... we don't want any garlands stuck to people's heads!

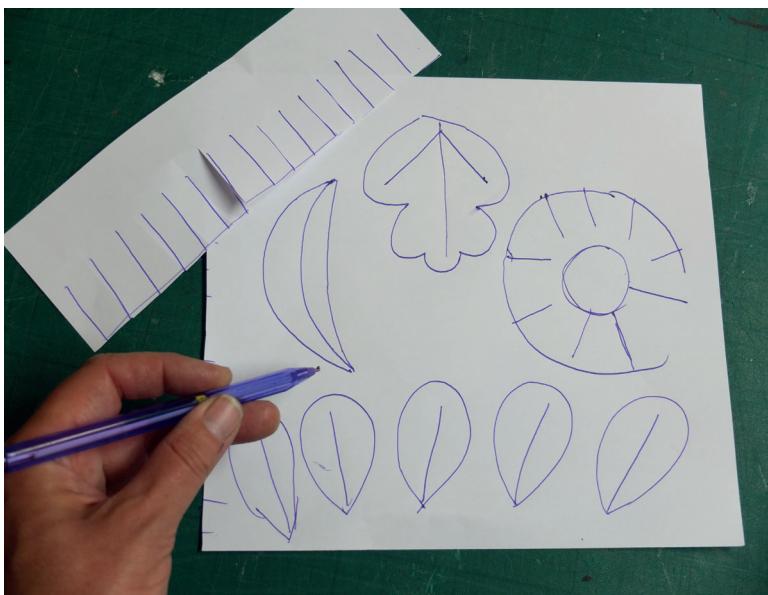


Cut a sheet of A4 into 3 strips lengthways. Stick them end to end so they make one long strip.

Wrap them around and join with a couple of clips to roughly the size for your bonce.

Adjust clips if necessary. Once you're happy with the fit, you can glue the ends in place (take it off your head first!)

STEP 2 - PLAY WITH SHAPES



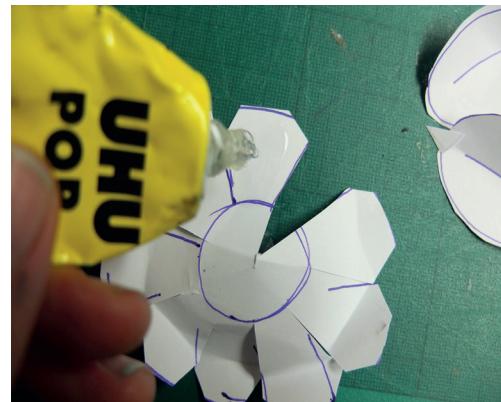
You can make lovely leaf shapes by gently-folding along CURVED lines.

If you make CIRCLE shapes and experiment with cutting pie like section away, you can make CONICAL shapes by joining the ends together.

Roughly draw out some naturey shapes with your biro. I'd recommend resting on a cutting mat or a bit of cardboard, as if you want to make your shapes 3D it's easier to fold along lines if you really press down with the biro to score the paper.

There is no reason not to stick to 2D shapes if you prefer, but I think making folded 3D shapes is FUN.

Cut your shapes out and start playing... bending, folding, tearing, cutting, pinching, rolling, glueing!



STEP 3 - EXCITEMENT AND DISAPPOINTMENT!



Step back and you might see that your failures were actually some of your most interesting shapes.

Maybe they don't remind you of flowers... if you accidentally made mouse ears or a banana, could you have more fun following those ideas?

Do your offcuts make any cool shapes?

Once you have finished playing the first round, see what you've got. Most likely you'll have a few flowery shapes you quite like, and a few UTTER DISASTERS that didn't work at all like you'd hoped. EXCELLENT!

This task is largely about FAILING as a way of learning. The bits you don't like... why didn't they work? Can you adapt them or put them together with other bits to make something better?





STEP 4- GARLANDS... ASSEMBLE!

You can 'go neat' but to be honest I like doing it while the ideas are still rough.

Ask yourself if you prefer seeing the biro lines, or the subtle light and shadow effect you get by showing the reverse plain side.

Should I stick the flowers straight on to the garland... maybe I could attach them via curly paper tabs so they wobble when I walk? Could I make that base more fun...like a crown maybe?

If your experience of this is anything like mine, you'll end up with something which is half pleasing, half gluey thumbprint nightmare, but hopefully at least a little bit EXCITING. I look forward to seeing you strutting the results down the highstreet in due course!

INSPIRATION STATION

Your garland doesn't have to be floral. The whole 'good luck' theme reminds me of charm bracelets... so maybe you could cover your garland with good luck charms! Paper is surprisingly versatile...so you could make a scene with a foreground and background, a party scene, a bunch of your favourite things...anything you like!



One final thing - if you're really struggling, CHEAT! There is tonnes of stuff on the internet on how to make paper flowers etc. No rules - JUST HAVE FUN!