1930

Merry Christ:mas..!

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Recommended Citation
Sindt, Elsa C. (1930) "Merry Christ:mas..!," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 10 : No. 6 , Article 4.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol10/iss6/4
Merry Christmas . . .!

By Elsa C. Sindt

WISH I could make clever Christmas cards to send to people," wistfully yearned Mary. "How on earth does Jane do it?"

As a matter of fact, it isn't so difficult—according to Jane. All one needs is an idea, and for the interested seeker, clever new suggestions pop up on every side. For instance, one might borrow an idea by tracing a clever motif or design from another Christmas card, a magazine illustration or an art book. It is comparatively easy to reproduce traced designs; one has done that since grade school. Attractive and striking results can be obtained by outlining the design in black India ink, and tinting the open spaces. One must, however, use great care in tinting designs in order to get the colors keyed together in value and intensity, and one must use equal care in placing the design on the card. Ask any first-quarter art student about proportion of margins and she will announce that the bottom margin should be wider than the top—and that the side margins should be equal. Right she is.

The lettering on a Christmas card either makes or breaks its effectiveness. Regular, blunt lettering pens are the simplest to use and give the most desirable effect. The implement may seem awkward at first, but excellent technique may be obtained with practice.

Another method of adapting one's own or some one else's pen-and-ink sketch, is to take a photograph of a particularly lovely design and reproduce it on art paper, rather than on the usual photographic board. For this card, one may perform his own photography, or he may have it done professionally. It is possible to do the lettering on the original design, making the final photograph the finished Christmas card. This method has the advantage of mass production with little labor, since it is comparatively easy to develop a negative into any number of prints.

The girl who is naturally clever at free-hand drawing will get a big thrill from drawing her own designs. After she has succeeded in outlining a fairly simple design, it need not take more than a few pleasant hours to make enough cards for her friends—providing the list is not too long nor the design too difficult. Modernistic designs—geometric and conventional—are quite popular in the art world at present because of their comparative newness and originality. The element of uncertainty enters into their ing method you might expend a little excess initial effort and transfer your design to a block of linoleum, cutting out lines or spaces to give a good light and dark effect. By painting the block a color in harmony with the paper to be used, carefully placing the block on the card, and firmly pressing the block on every inch of the surface, you will obtain what is commonly known as a block print. Several layers of newspaper underneath the card to be printed will improve the result because of the added spring or 'give.' One's name may be cut in the block (backwards, of course), so that no more lettering is necessary on the card. With this deft twist of the wrist one has gained a completed Christmas Greeting.

A clever Christmas card can be made by means of a neat little folder which, when opened, reveals a photograph of you or of your family. The technique of this method is quite similar to that of the photograph of a design. If one has the time, energy, and skill clever tinting adds enormously to the effect.

Some people are often clever enough to make a series of illustrations representing their families in the act of extending the Christmas greeting. This takes real skill and originality to be done well—but if you have the hankering to try your hand at it, go to it! The whole thing may be done by the use of a set of pens with points of varying width.

ONE way of making your Christmas greetings unusual and perhaps a little less expensive, is to make your own lining for the envelopes. Remarkably attractive effects can be obtained by spattering drops of thin oil paints of two or three colors on a pan of water. A slight stirring will produce surprisingly good designs which may be transferred to paper simply by laying a sheet of paper on the surface of the water for a moment, removing it, and letting it dry. With a little experimentation one may quickly perfect interesting color schemes and varied designs. The paper must necessarily be quite thin—but not flimsy. After cutting the paper to fit the envelopes, tiny specks of paste may be used in the corners. Too much paste will ruin the whole effect.

These are but a few of the many ways and means by which the emulous Mary might make clever, original, personal Christmas cards. To all other "Marys" who would try their hands at this art—greetings!—if you make your designs simple, strong but good in light and dark, conventional rather than naturalistic and, above all, if you have a clever, original idea as a basis, you will have a successful Christmas card.

Home Economist Speaks

Dr. Louise Stanley, chief of the Federal Bureau of Home Economics at Washington, D. C., addressed the girls of the home economics department Oct. 15 in the Catharine MacKay Auditorium. Dr. Stanley came to Iowa State from Shenandoah where she has been attending the national canning contest.

The three divisions of the Home Economics Bureau were outlined by Dr. Stanley, who hopes that within the next few years three additional divisions may be added to those already functioning.

None are all evil.—Byron.