



## paper love

GO BEYOND THE WRITTEN PAGE TO EXPLORE THE CREATIVE POTENTIAL OF PAPER.

WORDS AND STYLING **PIA JANE BIJKERK** PHOTOGRAPHY **CRAIG WALL**

**FROM A VERY YOUNG** age I was encouraged by my mother to keep a journal. I would fill page after page with thoughts, dreams, worries and aspirations, scribbling notes and illustrations along the way. Every now and then I would use a page or two to describe a significant event. I've continued to write this way and after 30 years it's hard to think of using paper in any other way.

Yet there are many other equally defined uses, from banknotes and sheet music to wallpaper and origami. In folklore it has appeared as messages carried in the beaks of owls across the skies, or in bottles across the seas, while in history there are pivotal documents and big books. Meanwhile, in everyday life, we are surrounded by paper, from correspondence and packaging to napkins, towels and baking aids.

So what could be a more intrinsic craft material than paper? Perhaps as a result of digital saturation, it's being celebrated and appreciated once again. While Britain's Robert Ryan creates extraordinary paper cuttings of whimsical and intricately detailed scenes, Australia's Anna-Wili Highfield sculpts animal figures with a unique ripping and assembling technique. Near Wollongong, Lizzie Buckmaster Dove uses maps and pages from books to create three-dimensional wall art, and in Sydney one-time graphic designer Jo Neville, from Paper Couture, makes bespoke stationery, and installations from crumpled brown packing paper and recycled print media. It's wonderful to see how paper can be crafted in so many different ways.

Inspired by these artists, I have begun looking at ways to use paper more creatively. Earlier this year, I made large paper wall flowers for my daughter Laly's bedroom,

crafting the petals from carefully scrunched up shipping paper I had saved from our relocation from Amsterdam to Sydney (see bottom right). Pinned to the wall above her bed, they create drama and whimsy, making me smile every time I walk into her room. Since making the flowers, I've moved on to paper crowns, garlands from torn paper and old-fashioned paper dolls.

Next on my paper creation list is making a keepsake book. Pages from an old hardback will form tiny pockets and hidden envelopes, similar to the one on the facing page, which was given to my friend Julia to celebrate the birth of her daughter. How special it will be to present it as a gift in years to come, filled with mementoes collected from her daughter's childhood.

As an author and lover of paper it is my hope that the humble page will remain at the centre of milestones in our lives, certifying our births, reporting our achievements, and celebrating significant events in our lives. As digital media expands, it's possible that books will become more valuable — and that paper art will flourish. So next time you unwrap a gift or recycle a newspaper, be inspired to see it in a whole new light to make something magical. \*

### PIA'S LINK LOVE

- 1 [www.misterrob.co.uk](http://www.misterrob.co.uk)
- 2 [www.annawilhighfield.com](http://www.annawilhighfield.com)
- 3 [www.lizziebuckmasterdove.com](http://www.lizziebuckmasterdove.com)
- 4 [www.papercouture.net.au](http://www.papercouture.net.au)
- 5 [www.uponafold.com.au](http://www.uponafold.com.au)

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