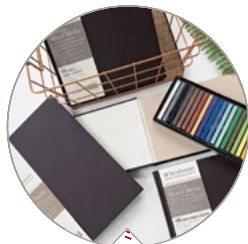




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MAIN FEATURE

10 Tips to Papercutting Success

By Grace Hart



riding on a unicorn, fairies having a tea party in a flower garden, a mermaid searching for seashells in the ocean. There I was, subconsciously learning how to draw as I took orders from my little boss with blonde pig tails. It opened up an entirely new world for me — it took me to a new world of creativity where I found joy in artistic expression.

A year later, I was introduced to papercutting by my mom after she returned from a papercutting workshop. She shared with me all that she had learned with great enthusiasm. At that time, I had a newborn baby and papercutting was literally one of the last things on my mind. I was a bit more consumed

Hi, my name is Grace Hart and I'm a papercutting artist. I sketch and cut all my work by hand using a single sheet of paper, a craft knife, and lots of blades. In 2007, I graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in Business Management. I actually grew up thinking that I didn't have an artistic bone in my body. I enjoyed studying business and following my graduation, working in the business sector. However, I still felt as though something was missing in my life. Then, my entire world changed for the better when my daughter turned two. For some reason (which I believe is fate) she demanded that I draw pictures for her to color instead of using the dozens of coloring books tucked away in her craft cupboard. She would put in her requests: a princess

"There is something surreal, even magical, about turning a sheet of paper into something beautiful."

with the simple things of life, like when I might be able to sleep or take a shower. Then, six months later and completely out of the blue, I suddenly had the urge to make a papercut on my own. So, I reached out to my mom to find out what I needed in order to give it a try. That night, I designed and cut my very first piece and instantly fell in love. I tell people it was "love at first cut"! Merging my self-taught ability to sketch with my newfound love of papercutting was, for me, the ultimate duo. I'd stumbled across a passion I didn't know existed and I've been papercutting nearly every day since. There

continued





Dream Big Little One

is something surreal, even magical, about turning a sheet of paper into something beautiful. It's actually even therapeutic for me to cut away all the little pieces of paper to reveal an expression of my inner self.

"...my entire world changed for the better when my daughter turned two...she demanded that I draw pictures for her to color instead of using the dozens of coloring books tucked away in her craft cupboard."



PAPERCUTTING HISTORY

Papercutting is the art of cutting designs from a single sheet of paper. Papercutters generally choose to cut with either a craft knife or small scissors.

The art of papercutting has a long history appearing first in China during the Han Dynasty. The oldest surviving paper cut dates back to the 6th century and is a symmetrical, geometric piece. Papercutting has evolved in different countries all over

the world with each culture developing their own unique attributes. For example, in China red paper is often used as it's the most popular color in Chinese culture. Their papercuts feature people, animals, flowers and symbols and are often used to express hopes and wishes. They call it jianzhi and often refer to paper cut pieces as "window flowers." In Mexico, bright colors are used and paper cut banners are made for celebrations. They use the beautiful papercut banners and decorations for holidays, birthday parties and wedding celebrations. German papercutting, also known as scherenschnitte (pronounced she-ren-shnit-uh), uses black paper and has a lovely folk art theme. German farmers originally started papercutting in the winters when they had spare time. They would create beautiful papercuts inspired by their farms, animals, homes, and the outdoors. Many other cultures all over the world have their own unique, papercutting

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characteristics. It's beautiful to see this art form so widely practiced by papercutting artists everywhere with their own distinct styles and techniques.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Papercutting is a great art to experiment with because the materials are so simple and fairly inexpensive. The essentials are:

1. Knife and Blades: Excel or Xacto® knife will do. I personally use #11 Excel blades.

wears out your hand cutting it. I also like the soft white color.

10 TIPS TO PAPER CUTTING SUCCESS

1. Positive and Negative Space. Papercut art is a simple art form with the sheet of paper and the pieces you cut away. Usually, you are only dealing with two colors — the color of your paper and your background. The proper use of positive and negative space makes a piece beautiful



Cruise

2. Self-Healing Cutting Mat: The cutting mat will last several months or sometimes longer. They can be found at your local craft store and online.

3. Paper: I prefer Strathmore 300 Series Drawing Paper. The 70 lb. paper weight holds together well, but isn't so thick that it

and interesting. Make sure your design highlights and draws attention to the focus of your piece.

2. Connectivity: Make sure your piece connects and is properly supported. You may have to rethink your design in order to have it all flow and connect.

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3. Hold your knife correctly and with appropriate pressure. Hold your knife like you would a pencil. Oftentimes, beginners do not apply enough pressure, which means they don't completely cut through the paper and end up going over the same spots over and over again in order to cut the paper.

5. Pull towards yourself for the most control. When you are starting out, you will feel the most secure when pulling the knife towards your body. This will create the cleanest cuts. Adjust the paper as you go along to make the cut — pulling towards yourself. As you practice more, you will



I love when you play make believe,
And want me to join in.



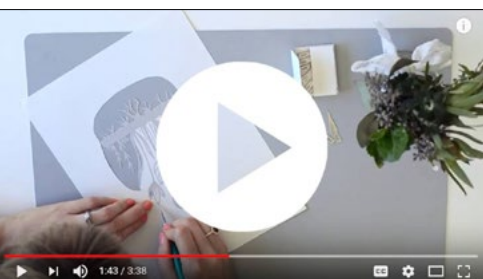
4. Change your blades often. I can't stress this enough. Mistakes are often made because of a dull blade. Dull blades will cause slipping, making you cut things you aren't planning to cut. I generally change my blade every 10-20 minutes. When the tip breaks you will hear a little tick sound. I don't currently know of any efficient way to sharpen blades, so I donate them to my local Artist Guild members who use them for art and craft projects that don't require the same level of sharpness that papercutting requires.

begin to feel more comfortable cutting in all directions.

6. Cut from left to right. Or, if you are left handed, right to left. You want to avoid going over the portion you've already cut with your hand to minimize damage. You can also place a paper over the portion you have cut.

7. Cut inside details and small pieces first. Those small pieces are easy to cut when the paper is supported and strong. If you want to do those pieces after it's been cut out, you might damage your piece.

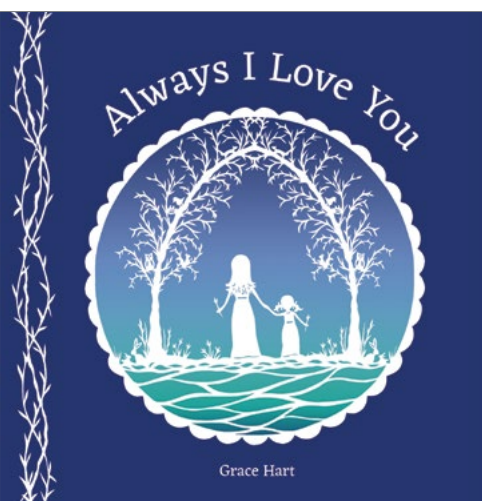
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Free video tutorial!



Free downloadable template!



Grace's book, available on Amazon soon.

8. Cut pulling from the strongest point out to the weakest point.

If you try the reverse, you will notice the paper may bend or curl. So when I cut things like blades of grass, I start at the base of the grass and pull to cut the tips of grass last.

9. Clean cut corners. The corners are often where the paper catches and doesn't get cut completely. Don't pull the paper out. This will cause the corner to fray and not look like a clean cut. Instead, figure out where your piece of paper is caught and go back over the corner with your knife.

10. Cut away excess paper as you go along. This helps to keep track of your progress and it is easier to remove the paper in smaller pieces.

If you want to give this incredible, ancient art form a try, check out my **free downloadable template** and short follow-along video. You can also watch the Strathmore papercutting videos I created: *Introduction to Papercutting*, *Sketching and Cutting Your Piece*, and *Framing Your Papercut*.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Grace Hart is an accomplished papercutting artist. Observers delight in finding her signature image — a heart concealed in each of her papercut pieces. She recently published a children's book that will soon be available through Amazon: *Always I Love You*, illustrated with her intricate papercuts. She has sold hundreds of papercut pieces all over the world, taught hundreds of people how to papercut throughout the United States, and recently displayed her largest piece on exhibition at the Mesa Arts Center. She has also filmed three informational papercutting videos for Strathmore Artist



Papers and has collaborated on design work for various companies. Grace lives in Arizona with her husband Jeff and their two children. She is a stay-at-home mom who enjoys playing trains and LEGOs® with her son and creating art projects and baking with her daughter. As a family, they enjoy the outdoors, travelling, and eating ice cream every chance they get. Grace finds so much fulfillment in her papercut art, but her greatest joy is reliving the magic and wonder of childhood through her children.

To see more of Grace's work visit:

www.alittleheart.com

Instagram: [@alittleheartpapercuts](https://www.instagram.com/alittleheartpapercuts)

Facebook: [A Little Heart](https://www.facebook.com/A.Little.Heart)

Download a free papercutting template from Grace and watch the video tutorial:

TEMPLATE

VIDEO



www.strathmoreartist.com



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WHAT'S NEW FROM STRATH MORE

2

METALLIC SKETCH JOURNALS

With flexible but sturdy 18pt. covers, these journals feature our 200 Series Sketch paper and are available in both brushed silver and hammered copper finishes. Great for on-location sketching and practicing techniques with dry media.



- Paper weight: 50 lb. (74gsm)
- Fine tooth surface
- 2 sizes - both available with brushed silver or hammered copper covers:
 - 5.5" x 8.5"
 - 9" x 12"

LEARNING SERIES HAND LETTERING

Strathmore now carries two **NEW** Learning Series pads:

- *Hand Lettering Basics*
- *Adorable Hand lettering*



Each Learning Series Hand Lettering pad includes:

- 12 step-by-step lessons from Maureen Wilson
- 12 blank sheets of 100 lb. (270 gsm) 200 Series Bristol Smooth paper (1 per lesson)
- Follow along with video tutorials for each lesson on strathmorelearning.com

Strathmore®
make something new

TONED MIXED MEDIA ART JOURNALS

Our new Toned Mixed Media paper is now available in hardbound and softcover art journals!

- Heavyweight: 184 lb. (300gsm)
- Vellum surface
- Suitable for both dry media and wet media applications
- Available in warm tan or cool gray
- Hardbound sizes: 8.5" x 5.5" & 8.5" x 11"
- Softcover sizes: 8" x 5.5" & 7.75" x 9.75"



www.strathmoreartist.com



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Art by Sarah Becketl

MONTHLY GIVEAWAY!



Show us your vision, win Strathmore products!

Post your Strathmore Vision custom cover on Instagram, use **#strathmorecovers**, and you could be randomly selected as one of our monthly giveaway prize winners!

During the first week of every month through December of 2017 we'll be selecting **1 random winner** from the pool of entrants.

PRIZE: a preselected assortment of \$100 worth of Strathmore products!

1

POST ARTWORK

Upload an image of the art you created on your Strathmore Vision cover to Instagram.

2

TAG & HASHTAG

Tag **@strathmoreart** and use the hashtag **#strathmorecovers** to be entered for a chance to win our monthly giveaway.

3

WIN A PRIZE!

A random winner will be chosen each month to win a pre-selected assortment of Strathmore products valued at **\$100!**

See contest rules [HERE](#)



@strathmoreart

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Strathmore® 2017 ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES

Join us for Strathmore's FREE 2017 Online Workshops!

Strathmore's Online Workshops feature free video lessons and downloadable instructions created by experienced artists. Follow along in the online classroom as instructors guide you

through various topics and demonstrate useful tips, techniques, ideas, and inspirations to get you creating and learning even more about art.

Share all the fun on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter using **#StrathmoreWorkshops**

WORKSHOP 3: Ethereal Mixed Media on Toned Paper



Instructor: Georgina Kreutzer

NOW OPEN: Runs through December 31st, 2017

In this 4 lesson pastel course, we will explore mixing various media as an extremely flexible and advantageous technique for creating art. Knowing how to use a wide array of art-making tools and products is powerful when approaching any kind of challenging subject. It's also vital for beginning artists to experiment and learn which kinds of media resonate with their own artistic direction. This **FREE** workshop will guide you through Georgina's techniques in mixed media art using pencils, soft pastels, inks and acrylics, with an aim to leave you confident in finding your own set of preferred skills.

About the instructor:

Georgina attended the National Art School in Sydney, Australia. Late in her undergraduate degree she began posting work to an Instagram profile, which gradually gained interest and amassed a following of other enthused, creative individuals.

Her work has been exhibited in Sydney, Byron Bay, and the Gold Coast. Many originals hang in homes in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the USA, Canada, Germany, Spain, Mexico, and the UAE.

Join us for our **FREE** workshops at:
strathmoreartist.com/artist-studio



www.strathmoreartist.com



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You Could Win a \$100 Art Materials Gift Card!



Speak directly to the Art Supply Industry by taking the 2018 NAMTA Artist Survey. The study's focus is active artists who have created ten or more artworks in the past year. If you are in the USA or Canada, take the 2018 NAMTA Artists Survey to help provide valuable feedback and get a chance at winning a \$100 Art Materials Gift Card!

Strathmore is a member of the International Art Materials Association (NAMTA) and together in November we are conducting the tri-annual Artist and Art Materials Survey. We want you to participate! There are several benefits to completing the survey:

- You become eligible to win one of five \$100 art supply store gift certificates that can be redeemed at any NAMTA Member Retailer.
- Your input will help artist organizations, art schools, and others serve you better.
- You'll be heard because the survey results provide feedback to art material retailers and makers of art supplies like us.

TAKE THE SURVEY

Thank you,
Strathmore and NAMTA - The International
Art Materials Association





Questions from our Website

Question: Can I print on your art paper?

Answer: Many artists ask us if they can run our Watercolor, Mixed Media, Bristol and other art papers through an inkjet or laser printer. Typically they are looking to reproduce art prints on paper that would be true to the medium used to make the print look as authentic as possible. Other artists are looking to print certain elements onto art paper, then complement the piece with watercolor, markers, or other mediums, so they need a paper that not only prints well but can hold up to the mediums being applied.



Photography by Laura Baptist

The answer to whether or not our art papers can be used for inkjet or laser printing is not completely straightforward. In our manufacturing process we do not add any ingredients to the paper that are designed specifically for inkjet or laser printing properties. We also do not test for inkjet or laser printing in our quality control and

evaluation process. Therefore, we cannot technically recommend any of our art paper for inkjet or laser printing.

However, many artists do run our papers through printers and are happy with the results. Sheets such as Watercolor and Bristol are fairly thick and printer models with a larger bend in the paper feed could pose an issue. Check your printer manual to see how thick of paper can be run through without jamming it. We also suggest using a sample sheet if possible to test the results and see if they would meet your expectations.

We offer a limited line of Inkjet Papers that are ideal for reproducing artwork and photography. The 8.5"x11" size is perfect for desktop inkjet printers. Paper types in our inkjet line include:

- **Watercolor:** medium texture, cold press
- **Texture:** felt finish for a soft look
- **Radiant Gloss:** distinctive pearl-like finish
- **Matte:** print photos on a matte finish
- **Glossy:** print photos on a glossy finish

We also carry a line of Inkjet Cards which are great for sending your artwork in a personalized greeting.

- **Textured:** light texture for a soft look
- **Pearl:** elegant pearlescent surface
- **Matte:** non-glare, smooth surface
- **Gloss:** smooth, glossy coating

