



An Elegant Composition

Artwork by Carrie Gonzalez & Jean Wilson • Story by Carrie Gonzalez

When I was 7 years old my mother gave me my first journal. It was small with faded blue fabric and tiny pink roses on it. I remember how special it felt to have this little treasure, a place of my own — a place to guard my secrets, draw pictures and be whoever I wanted to be. I recently pulled it out, dusted it off and flipped through the slightly aging pages. Looking down at this little frayed book, I never would have dreamed that one day, my mother and I, together, would be creating our own little treasures to share with others.

Each journal has a unique personality, which slowly emerges with each layer of paper, tiny sequin or delicate jewel. Inspiration really is never in short supply. It can come from a haunting vintage photograph, a crinkled piece of trim or a beautiful piece of paper. It is as though a light goes off and we begin digging through trunks and hatboxes searching for the perfect components to complete each little work of art. Bit by bit they begin to emerge. Some become notebooks sitting on the kitchen counter ready to write grocery lists, recipes or “to do” lists. Others seem destined to take a different path. They become that unique place where you can spill your darkest secrets, vent your frustrations or become that 7 year old again, realizing your hopes and dreams. Whatever your motivation is for creating a journal, be prepared — it becomes habit forming as you try and outdo yourself with each new book.



TOOLS & MATERIALS

- * Adhesives: glue stick; hot glue gun; ribbon glue (Making Memories)
- * Cardstock: various colors
- * Composition books or any vintage book/journal
- * Craft knife, paper cutter & scissors
- * Craft paint & sponge brush
- * Embellishments: buttons, pearls, trims, vintage millinery flowers
- * Ephemera: charms; flat-backed keys (K&Company); vintage jewelry, etc.
- * Fibers: assorted
- * Gel medium
- * Glitter: fine & glass
- * Hole punch
- * Images: collage sheets; old photos
- * Ink: (Ranger — Distress Ink)
- * Lace: vintage
- * Manila library pockets
- * Papers: 12"x 12" scrapbook paper, vintage sheet music, vintage wallpaper
- * Shipping tags or already embellished tag
- * Stamps: various

TIPS

- * When applying the paper, work quickly to smooth and place it before it dries. If you make a mistake you can always use a layering technique with various sheets of paper.
- * Cover and ink several books ahead of time, allowing the ink to fully dry. It makes the decorating process even more fun having the "work" out of the way.
- * Save your scraps of trims and lace to embellish journals.

TECHNIQUE

The process for creating each journal is much the same. First you want to gather all of your materials together. Have a wide variety of items in front of you so that you have lots to choose from. I am always looking for the perfect shade of trim or the right button to fit the journal's overall look. Flea markets and thrift stores are a great place to find unique embellishments for this project. Begin by choosing two sheets of paper and coordinating cardstock. Line the journal/book with cardstock, cutting to fit first. Trace, cut and cover the front and back with paper, leaving a slight edge of the book showing on the left-hand side. Use gel medium or craft glue to adhere papers. Trim the edges with scissors/craft knife. Use an inkpad in coordinating color on all edges of journal for a clean finish.

Next glue images to cover with gel medium/glue stick. (I like to add all the trims/lace before embellishing with

details.) Using ribbon glue, adhere trim/lace to left edge of book. Layer and tie additional ribbons, lace, pearls, flowers, or accompaniments. Use hot glue on flowers for a stronger hold. Embellish cover with various items, playing to see what looks best for your overall theme.

For a matching bookmark begin by using scraps from the journal cover or complementary paper to cover a blank shipping tag. Trace, cut and glue to tag, punching a hole through for ribbons. Ink tag and set aside to dry. Using a small library pocket, sponge paint onto front of pocket. Apply a thin coat, which will dry quickly. Glue pocket to inside cover of book with paper glue. Embellish as you wish with something flat like a picture or quote. Decorate your bookmark and add pretty ribbons and fibers. Place the bookmark in pocket for safekeeping. Let entire book dry for 12–24 hours and enjoy.

CARRIE

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