

Masha Reprintseva



The Bird of Peace

In support of peace and mental health

“Art is unquestionably one of the purest and highest elements in human happiness. It trains the mind through the eye, and the eye through the mind. As the sun colors flowers, so does art color life.”

— John Lubbock, *The Pleasures of Life*

There is an increasing amount of scientific evidence that proves art enhances brain function. It has an impact on brain wave patterns and emotions, the nervous system, and can actually raise serotonin levels. Creative work can change a person's outlook and the way people experience the world.

While observing a piece of art or a handcrafted item people potentially firing the same neurons as the artist did while creating, thus making new neural pathways and stimulating a state of inspiration. They "unlock" the puzzle of "how to make this".

When you create an item yourself - you do even more, you do an "embodied cognition", which raises up concentration, increases blood flow to the brain and distracts us from disturbing feelings.

I hope you enjoy this series of lessons and the making of an embroidered box, and after completing all the processes, you will reward yourself with a pat on the back and a kind word in addition to your aesthetic and artistic impressions.

Masha Reprintseva

*The Bird of
Peace*

Lesson 1



To stitch the design, you will need quite a minimal set of materials and tools, most of which you may find in your collection of textile scraps, beads and threads, a simple embroidery hoop, cardboard and glue.

To assemble the box, you will need a paper cutter, pressing clips, ruler and cutting mat.



Find some piece of cloth. It may be cotton or linen fabric. Choose organic materials without any synthetic fibres because they are easier to work with.

For the outer part of the box, you may use linen (coloured) or cotton/linen blend.

You will need to cut two pieces of fabric (for the cover of the box and bottom part) size 16x16cm. Cut one long piece (to cover the borders of the box 80x20cm).

For the inside part, you may use cotton (white), cutting it the same sizes as the linen for the outer part.



To process the key part of the design, you will need a thick cotton cord. You can use macrame yarn or any other cotton cord or raffia. You may even make it yourself, using cotton threads and twisting them thick.



Metallic thread is used to attach the cotton cord to the base. It makes the embroidery shimmer. You may use silver or golden thread (according to the preferred palette), floss or on a bobbin - any that you have or like.



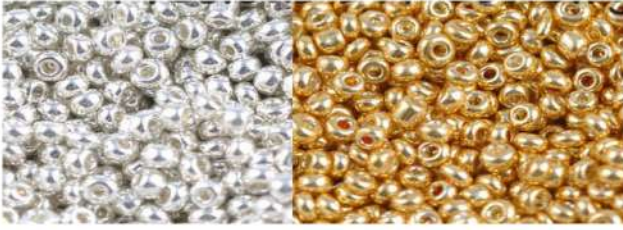
You will need about 6-8 sew-in crystals (3mm) to use in the embroidery and in the beaded element. If you have some - that is great! If you do not, please, no worries, substitute them with bicones (if you have) or simple glass beads.



For the central beaded element, you need 4 beads (imitation of pearl) size 6mm. You may choose any colour you have in your collection of materials, but consider the mood and the palette of the design you wish to achieve.



For beadworking use nylon beading thread and fine needles.



You will also need 40 glass beads (golden/silver, choose the colour you like). To spread around the design and to use in the beaded element (central).



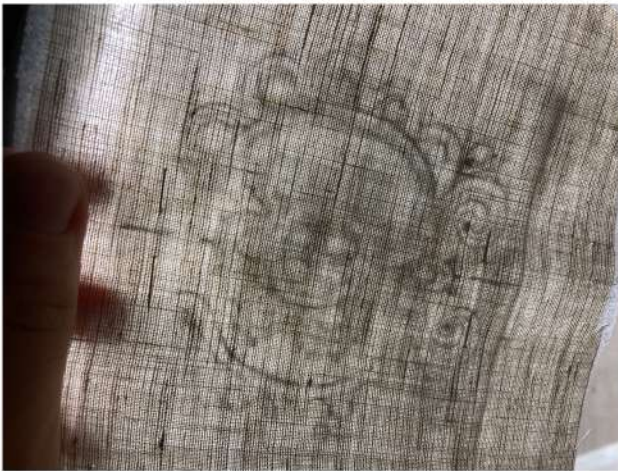
White pearl tiny glass beads to use in bead weaving and embroidery (you will need about 60pcs).



In the design, I used freshwater pearls "potato" shapes. You are free to substitute them with any other beads if you do not have pearls. You will need 6 pcs (the size of a green pea) and 4 pcs a bit smaller.



To fill in the space around the pearls you will need some metallic bullion rough purl (golden or silver). Look for some scraps, you will not need much. If you do not have any bullion purl you are free to use any other materials you have like beads (fill in the space with beads), or metallic threads (fill in the space with "french knots").



Print out the pattern (next page). The size of the design should be 12x12cm. Transfer the design onto the fabric. Use the method of transfer you like most. I used a lamp and a pencil to trace the design. You may use film, tissue paper, or powdering (first piercing the lines of the design).

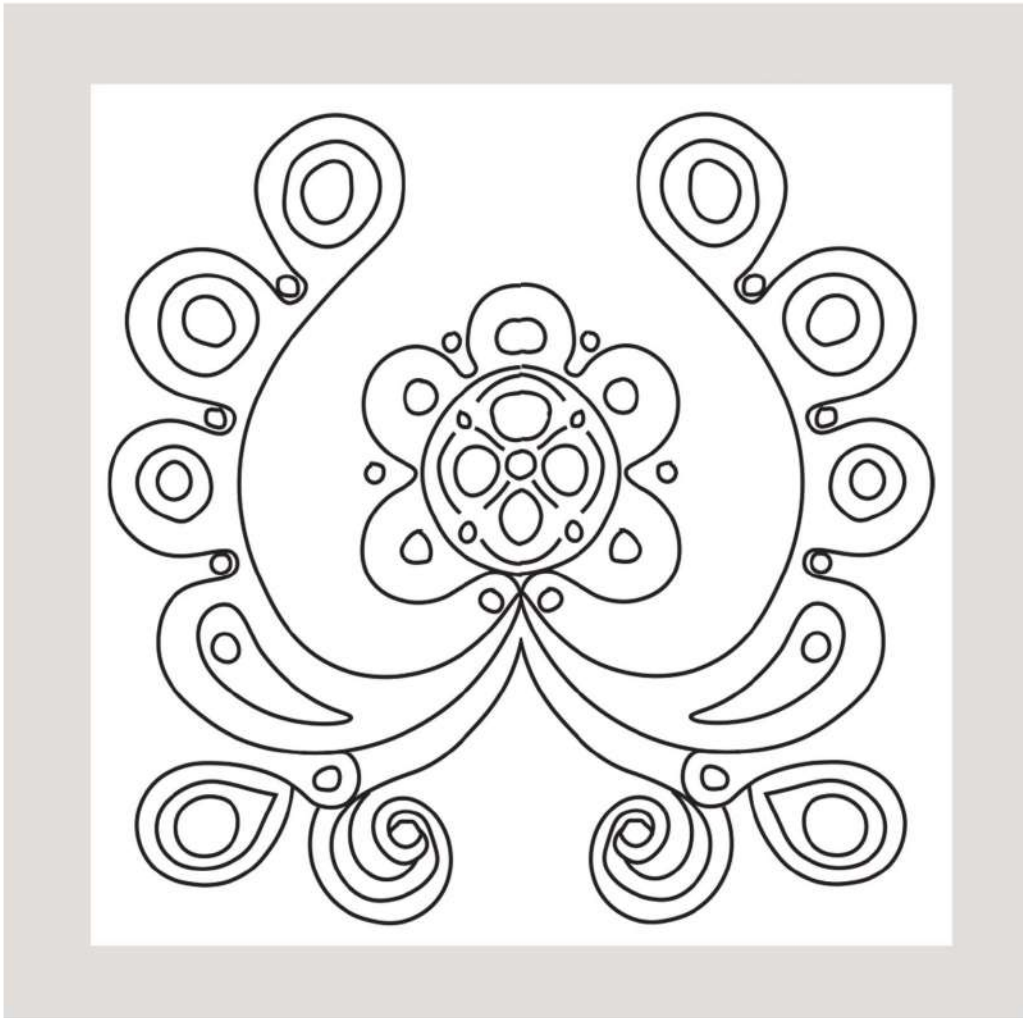


Secure the piece of fabric you are going to stitch with some pins on top of the backing fabric stretched in the embroidery frame. After, set a series of securing stitches all around. In this design I used very light linen, so to make the construction more stable, first I stretched a piece of backing fabric (thick cotton). On top of it, I attached the piece to embroider.



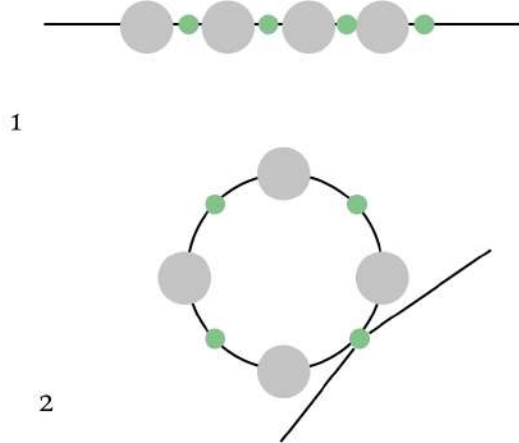
If you do not have a frame, use a simple round embroidery hoop. If you feel that the piece you are going to stitch is quite thin, you may stabilize it as I did - with a fusible non-woven material on the back, to prevent overstretching.

Pattern



12x12cm

Lesson 2



Thread a beadwork needle with nylon thread and get ready to work on the bead-weaved element.

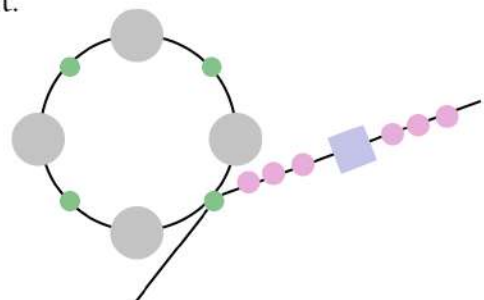
- 1.) Thread the beads like it is shown in the diagram on the left: four beads 6mm and four beads 3mm, one after another.
- 2.) Pull the ends through the closing bead.



Your result should be like in the photograph on the left. If you feel that the construction is not firm enough, thread the needle around the “circle” to fasten it.

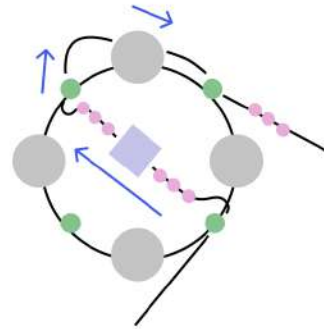


Next, thread three beads (imitating tiny pearls), crystal and three beads again. See the diagram below and the photograph on the left.

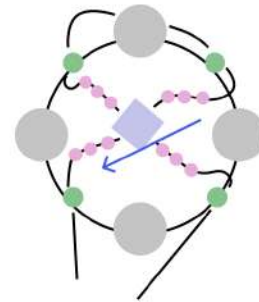




Follow the diagram below to see the way of weaving.



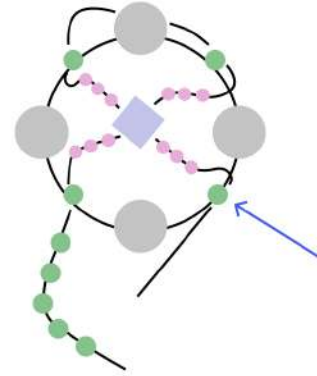
On accomplishing the previous step, thread three beads (tiny pearls) and pull the needle through the crystal.



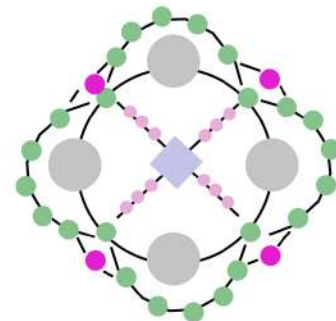
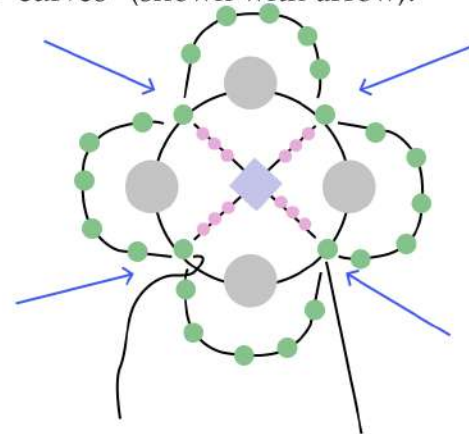
Pull the end of the thread out and tighten the construction. If you feel that the “dome” is not firm enough, thread the needle around the “circle” to fasten it.



Now make the “framing” for the “dome”. Use the same beads which you used in the beginning as “spacers” between the bigger beads. Thread five beads in line, and pull the thread through the bead marked with an arrow. Repeat the action.



You may stop here, making one more tour for fastening around the “frame” with a thread or adding tiny beads in between the “curves” (shown with arrow).



Your result should be very similar to the one above and the photo on the left. Secure the element on the fabric with stitches to prepare it for the next stage.

Lesson 3



Cut a piece of cotton cord 50cm in length and thread the needle with metallic thread, preparing it for stitching.

1.) Secure one end of the cord with a series of stitches done with metallic thread. Cut the allowance of fibres of the cord close to the area fastened with metallic thread.

2.) Sew in one glass bead as it is shown in the photograph on the left.



Using a "couching stitch", secure the piece of a cotton cord with a series of stitches following the line of the design. The space between each stitch should be no more than 1-2mm.

On reaching the bead, "wrap" with the cord and continue the way back.



Wrap the central element and process the opposite side the same as you have just done.



Sew in another glass bead and "wrap" it with the cord the same way. Pay attention to the position of the outward cord.



Continue couching the cord, going up the curve (in the inside of it), securing it with stitches.



Fix the end of the cord the way you did at the start.



Sew in the crystals. Arrange them symmetrically, setting them close to the recently stitched cord.



Cut two pieces of cotton cord 120cm in length each.

1.) Find the centres of the cord pieces and secure them together on top of the "crown" element: one - close to the crystal, another - above it.

2.) The first cord will run close to the crystals "wrapping" them, the second cord will be the finishing "framing".



Having made the "wrapping" by the first cord. Stitch the second close to it and form the parts in between the crystals, to set in there some glass beads afterwards.



Fix both cords where the arrow points.



Go to the top. Do the same to the opposite side.



The "crown" for the "dome" element is ready.



Turn up the ends of the cords left from the processing of the "crown".
The (1) upper ones leave for a while and work with the bottom ones (2).



Secure the cord (2) with a "couching stitch" following the line of a "wing".



Do the contouring of the curves. As you have done with contouring of the crystals (in the "crown"), this row will be the base for the "framing" row.



When you reach a point between the base of the wing and the bottom curve element (narrowest part), secure the cord on top and in between of two ropes and lay it out (shown by arrow) in a raised position. Fix the end of the cord with a series of stitches.



Do the same to the opposite side.



Contour the curves of the wing with the cord to "couch" it with metallic thread.



Fix the end of the cord and cut it.



Now return to the upper cords, which have been left for a while.



Contour the "wing" element with the cord, forming the "setting" for the glass beads (pointed with an arrow).



If you do things right, the "wing" should look this way.



Fix the cord with the pin.



Form the element reminding the shape of "8". The bottom part of the element should be a bit larger, the upper - smaller. The bottom part will hold the pearl. The upper part will hold the glass bead.



Cut the cord.



Fix the end of the cord with pins and form the "8". Stitch the element with a "couching stitch".



Do the same, processing the opposite side.



Cut the cord. Form the element.



Hide the end of the cord beneath the "crossing" of the "8" element.



Well done!

Lesson 4



Set the glass beads in the holes as it is shown in the photographs on the left.



Set the glass beads in the holes in the "crown" as it is shown in the photographs on the left.



Process the fitting of the beads (which you have) in the "wings". At first it seemed for me Ok to set freshwater pearls all along the holes, but after stitching them on I preferred to change two pearls in the bottom part (each side) into simple glass beads of a smaller size.



The space between the bead and the "border" made with cord, should be filled in.



You may fill it with golden "chips" (cut the gimp and sew it in chaotically), lay the pieces of bullion wire or tiny glass beads, or silk threads (couch silk thread with metallic thread).



I used golden gimp (twisted). If metalised thread is all what you have, set some "french knots" they will work fine.



Process the same to the opposite side.

In the photograph on the left, I noted the bead which I changed into a smaller one. If you are satisfied with the size of the beads you have, leave them as is.



In the photograph on the left, I noted the beads which I changed into smaller ones. If you are satisfied with the size of the beads you have, leave them as is.



On accomplished the setting of the beads/ pearls in their "frames", turn to the beads laid work on top of the curve elements located at the bottom part of the design.

Fasten end of a beading thread (shown with an arrow) and thread in about 15-20 tiny pearl beads (glass beads).



Fasten the working thread (you may use metallic thread) and, step by step (the bead after the bead) by a "couching stitch" sew in the threaded beads.



Make the spacing in between the beads equal.



Do the same to the opposite side.
And the embroidery is ready!

Lesson 5



Prepare the cardboard pieces for gathering. Cut the parts which make the borders, the lid and the bottom. The sizes to cut the board (grey) are:

the lid and the bottom (square) - should be both cut 11.5 x 11.5cm

bottom border includes two sizes: 11.5 x 4cm (2pc), 11 x 4cm (2pc)

lid border includes two sizes: 11.5 x 3cm (2pc), 11 x 3cm (2pc)

NOTE: In this part of the making, you will need different types of cardboard. The grey one (binding board) is quite thick. It is used for making book covers, I use it for constructing the boxes. White cardboard (soft and crispy) is thinner than gray, often used for beer mats. You need it for making the inner borders of the box and some outside works. For the box, you need about 50x50 cm square of each type of cardboard. You will also need a piece of watercolour paper to cover the inner border of the box.

We will also use two types of glue. Glue stick (make sure/test if you can use a glue stick which you have in your stock for gluing fabric) for attaching fabric to the cardboard; and PVA glue for gluing cardboard to cardboard and cardboard to paper.

a patchwork ruler (optional, but helpful)
scissors
PVA glue
clips for fixing
a pencil
a creasing tool
a glue stick
a synthetic brush (for glue)
a paper cutter
a bobbin of masking tape
a piece of polyester padding/cotton felt
a cutting matt





Now, switch on to the box "construction", you will need the pre-cut parts and a bobbin of masking tape.



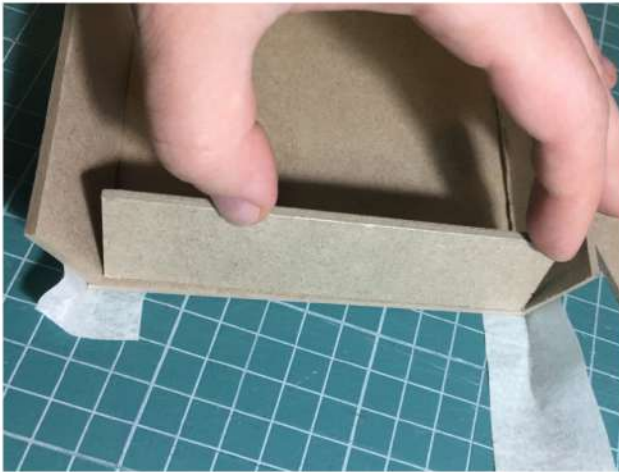
At first, we need to make the base of the box: the lid and the bottom part. Set the borders, fixing them with paper tape.



Start with the longest parts (11.5 x 4cm) of the borders. At the next stage, they will give stability to the shorter parts (11 x 4cm).



Be accurate. If you notice that the elements cut unevenly, align the sides by trimming them a bit with a knife.



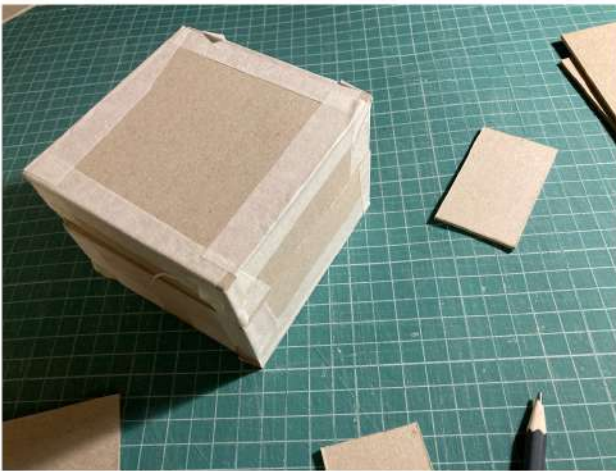
Take a smaller part, insert it in between the borders (you have recently arranged), and fix it with some tape.



With smaller pieces of masking tape fix the adjoining sides and corners.



Process the same manipulations and gather the second part of the box.



Now both parts are ready. Check if they fit each other well.



Use a brush to take some glue and spread it inside the box along the hems between the sides of it.

It will give firmness to the construction.

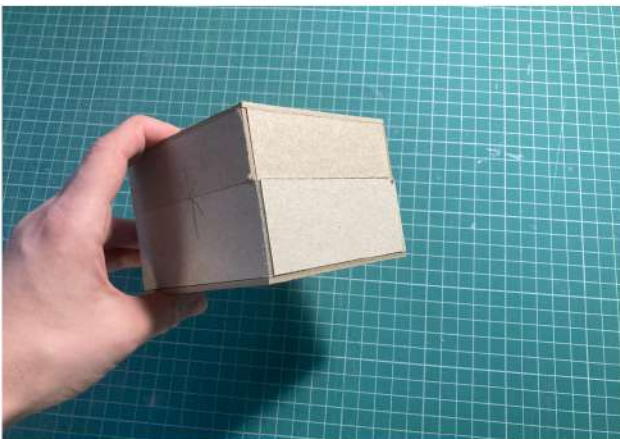
Wait until the glue dries and go to the next stage.



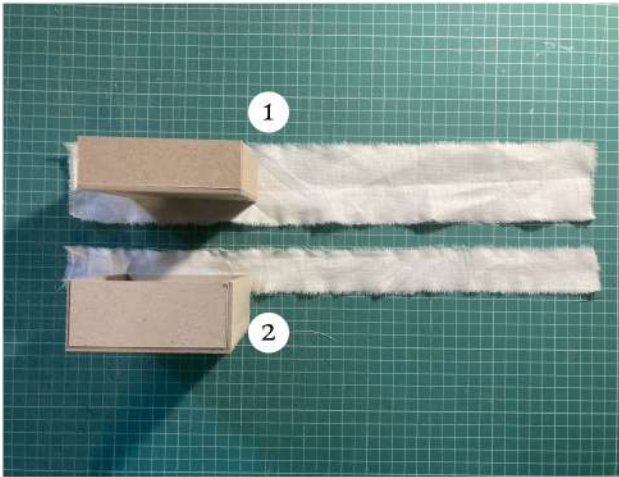
Mark the backside and the center.



Let the box dry.



Peel off the masking tape and check if each part of the box fits well with one another. If you feel that the edges do not fit well, use sandpaper and brush them up a bit.



Take the piece of cotton fabric which you have prepared recently. Cut one long piece (3x80cm) and the second one (7x80cm).

1) The first needs to be glued to the bottom part (covering the edges) of the box.

2) The second one - to the lid (to cover the edge and the lid on the inside).

The fabric should stretch slightly across the width. This will ensure ease when sticking it onto cardboard.



Take the bottom part of the box and the stripe of cotton fabric cut 3x80cm in length. Apply some glue (glue stick) to the inside part of the box sides (close to the edges). Work out each corner to apply the glue evenly (you may use a synthetic brush). Avoid leaving the excess glue, it might stain the fabric.



Starting from the center (backside) going along the borders (on the inside). Start gluing the piece of cotton fabric, spreading it accurately.



Having reached the corner, turn to the next side and glue the fabric onto it. Sharpen the corner, working it out with a creasing tool or with a spoon (the edge of it).



Apply some glue to the sides of the border outside the box (the bottom part). Spread the glue evenly without excess.



Turn out the fabric, and glue it onto the outer part of the border. Stretch a bit the allowance of the fabric coming on the corner before gluing it. Let it fit the corner, glue it, flatten and press to avoid wrinkles.



Having reached the center where you have started gluing the fabric, cut the excess of the fabric right at the point where the end meets.



Turn to the gluing of the lid. Apply some glue to the inside part of the lid. Here you need to spread the glue onto the inside of the borders, the corners, and the inside part of the lid too - the area adjoining the border.



To spread glue evenly use a synthetic brush.



Take the next piece of cotton fabric and glue it the same way as you did. The difference is that you need to let the fabric cover the borders and come to the area where the lid meets the sides. Having reached the center where you have started gluing the fabric, cut the excess of the fabric right at the point where the end meets. See the photograph on the left.



Turn out the allowance of the fabric and glue it, stretching a bit the cloth on reaching the corners - to let the fabric fit onto them evenly.



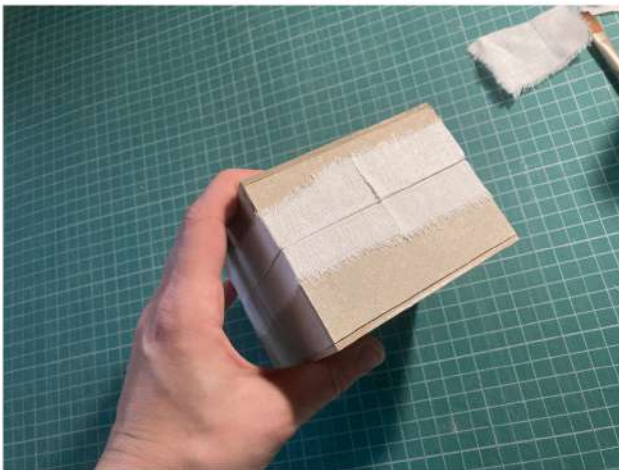
The "secret" method to even the fabric and speed up the drying process is to use an electric iron in medium heat. But, be very accurate!



Another fitting.

- 1.) The bottom part
- 2.) The lid

Fold evenly the excess of the fabric in the corners of the lid (marked with an arrow).

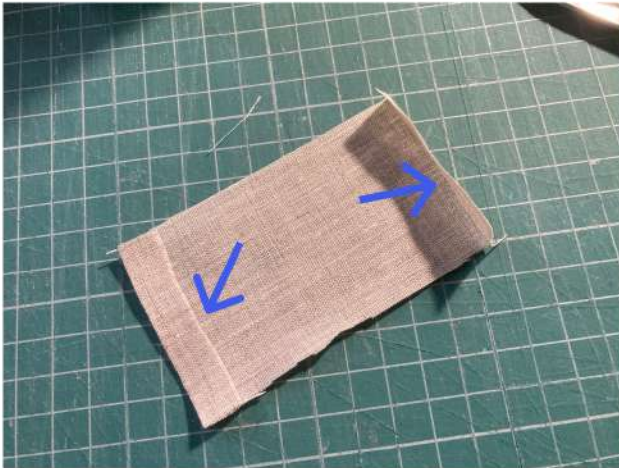


One more fitting. Now the dried parts should come up evenly without any errors and gaps.



Now make a "hinge" - to join the lid and the bottom part.

Cut a piece of fabric (which you used as the main one for the embroidery and future covering for the box). Its width should be two centimeters longer than the width of the box, and the height - two centimeters shorter than the box height.



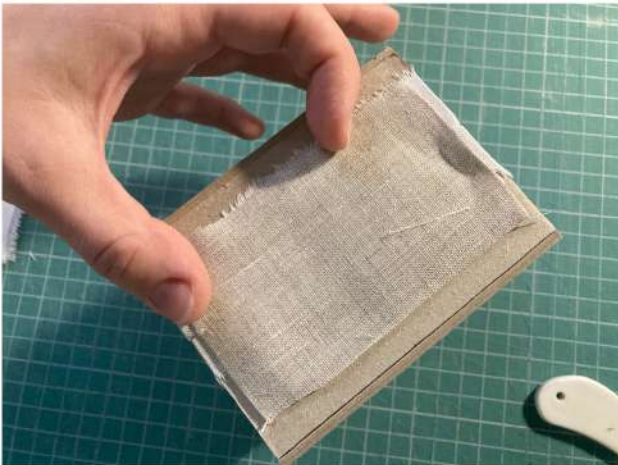
Turn the allowance of the fabric, press, and prepare it for gluing.



Leave some space on each side of the box - to the left and right of the "hinge" - about 2-3 mm (equal to the thickness of the cardboard).



Secure together the upper and the bottom part of the box. Use masking tape or elastics. Apply the glue to the backside.



Glue the "hinge" and spread it. Let it dry for a couple of hours or use a "secret" method with an electric iron.



Now, when the outer part of the "hinge" is ready, turn to the processing of its inside part. Using the scraps of white cotton fabric, make the same measures and cut the piece leaving some allowance on the sides (1cm each).



Mind that this element should fit the borders, cover the adjoint part of the lid and reach the bottom part to hide there.

Mind the same 2mm spacing on each side (marked with pink circles).



Process the fitting. Check out if the length of the piece is enough to cover the part of the adjoint area of the lid, the border, and to let it go down the box's inner (bottom) side.



Fits well! Apply the glue (glue stick), spreading it evenly with a synthetic brush. Cover all the surfaces which you will "envelope" with the fabric.



Start gluing the fabric from the lid, spreading the allowance inside (onto the lid segment).



Then go onto the borders and spread the fabric on the sides. Reach the edge, press the fabric onto the adjoint point of two parts of the box and reach the border of the bottom part.

Smooth the fabric, press it with a creasing tool. Work out well the edges and the corners. Let it dry.



Between two parts of the box now is a jointing "hinge". After closing in it should appear an even and straight fold. You may mark/crease it before folding with a creasing tool.



Now it is better to leave the box overnight to let it dry properly. Secure the position of the "hinge" with a couple of clips.

Lesson 6



Since the box is dry, you may start decorating it. Cut a 14x14cm piece of the main fabric to cover the bottom of the box.



Apply some glue (glue stick) to the bottom side, spread it evenly and glue the piece of fabric.



Apply some glue to the sides and glue the allowance of the fabric on all the sides of the box.



Flatten and press.



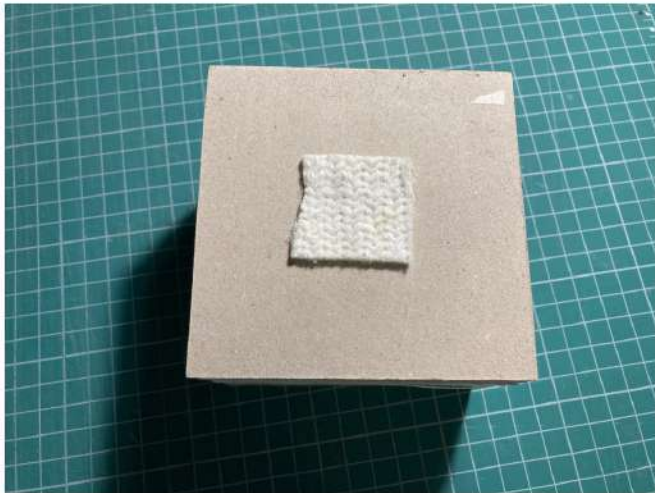
Work out the corners. Cut a triangular segment of the excess fabric of the corner which makes the fold as shown in the photograph on the left.



Press the ends together and glue, folding to the side of the box.
Treat each corner the same way.



Make the padding for the lid. I used here a cotton felt, you can use wool or polyester. Cut three squares, one should be the same size as the lid, the other two should be slightly smaller.



Secure the smallest square in the centre of the top side of the lid. Use double side tape or the same glue stick.



Put the bigger one on top of it.



Cover the lid with the biggest piece of felt. Align the edges of the felt piece with the edges of the box. Cut the excess if needed.



Cut the backing piece of fabric (stitched to the back side of the embroidered piece) the size of the box lid.



Cover the whole "sandwich" on top of the box with the embroidered piece and align it towards the edges.



Find the correct position towards the vertical and the horizontal of the design. Press the edges crease them - these will be your "markers". To the sides of the embroidered piece stick the pieces of some masking tape, this will help you to secure it and glue it afterwards.



Apply some glue to each upper side of the lid border.



Set the embroidered piece on top and align it to the edges.



Glue each (opposite) side having pulled it down by the allowance. After securing the allowance with a piece of tape (for a while).



To the left and to the right, here and there.



And, on the back to. Leave it for a while.



Process the upper corners the same way you did to the bottom ones.



Cut a triangular segment of the excess fabric of the corner which makes the fold as shown in the photograph on the left. Press the ends together and glue, folding to the side of the box.



Let it dry for overnight. Next, you will cover the sides and the box will become more "polished" and aesthetic. Let it dry for overnight. Next, you will cover the sides and the box will become more "polished" and aesthetic.

Lesson 7



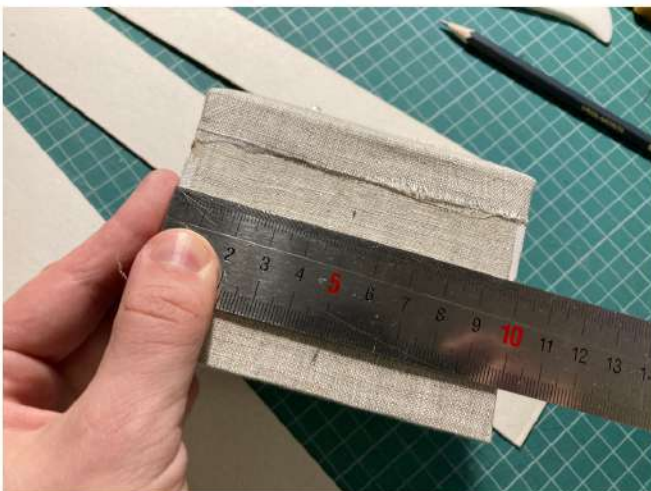
We are almost finished with all necessary decoration.

Now let's cover the sides to make the box look more complete.

Measure the height of the border at the bottom. This parameter will be needed to cut the cardboard for covering the sides and making the cardboard "wrapping".

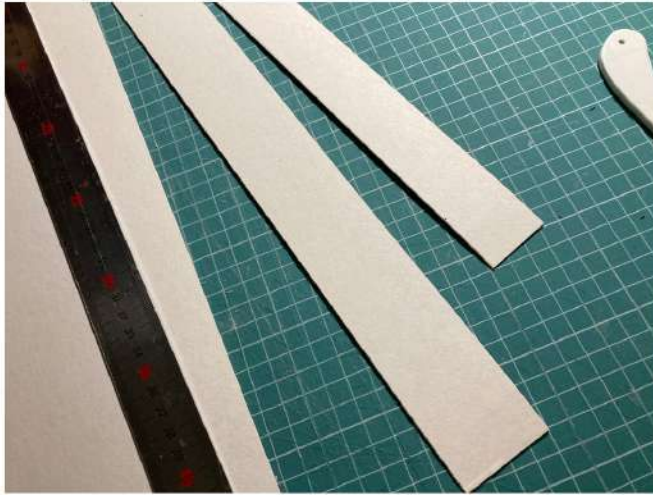


Measure the height of the upper side.



Measure the width of the box.

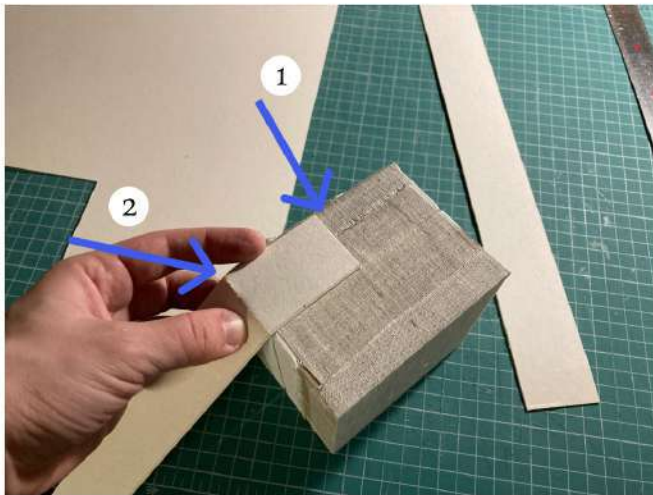
Use white cardboard 1.5-1.8mm thick. The one that is commonly used for beer mats (I told you about it in the beginning).



Cut two pieces measuring them according to the parameters you have and the following formula:

Height of the lid sides X Width of the box (four times) + 5cm allowance.

If the height of the lid is 3.5cm and its width is 12cm (x4) + 5cm (allowance), the cardboard piece should come = 3.5cm (height)x53cm(width).



If the cardboard you have does not let you to cut one piece 53cm long, compound it, accurately glueing the precut parts in one long piece (paper+glue or masking tape).

1)Mark the centre in the backside of the box. Align the cardboard piece to the borders and mark the centre.

2)Secure the piece, just keeping it stable with your fingers. Turn the cardboard piece "wrapping" it around the box, let it "crack" on reaching the corner.



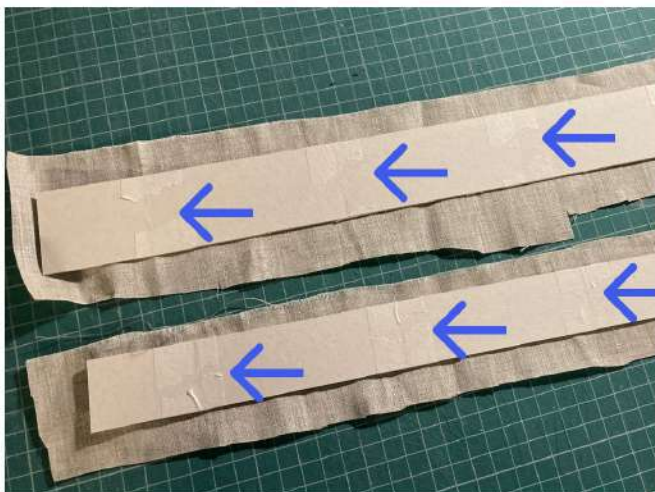
Wrap the cardboard piece around the box, working out ("cracking") corner after the corner. Try to set the cardboard piece parallel with the edges of the lid, making the "cracks" even and straight.



On reaching the central mark on the backside, mark the point where the cardboard ends meet. Be precise! Avoid any spacing inbetween the ends.



Cut the excess, minding the vertical. Do the same processing the cardboard element for the bottom part.



Cover the "cracked" area with masking tape to prevent stacking the excess of glue in the cracks and to make the cardboard more flexible. Cover all the corners. Cut two pieces of the main fabric (see the photographs on the left), for covering the cardboard elements.



Apply some glue onto the cardboard pieces and glue the fabric to the cardboard elements. Cut the angles of the fabric allowance, this will make them less bulk.



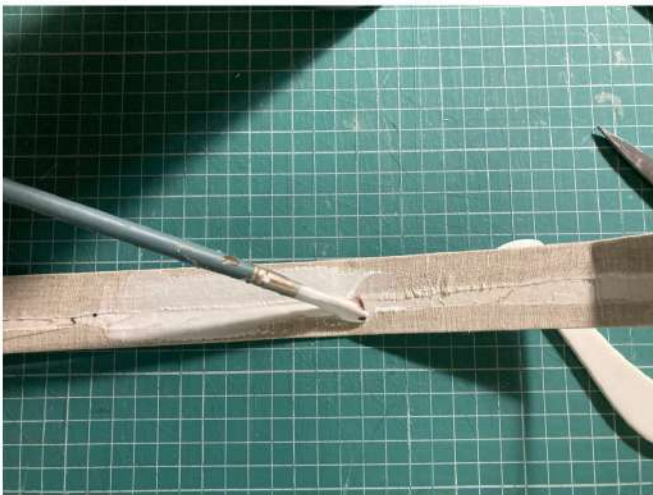
Glue the allowance each side accurately flattening it.



Fit the element, wrapping the box with it.



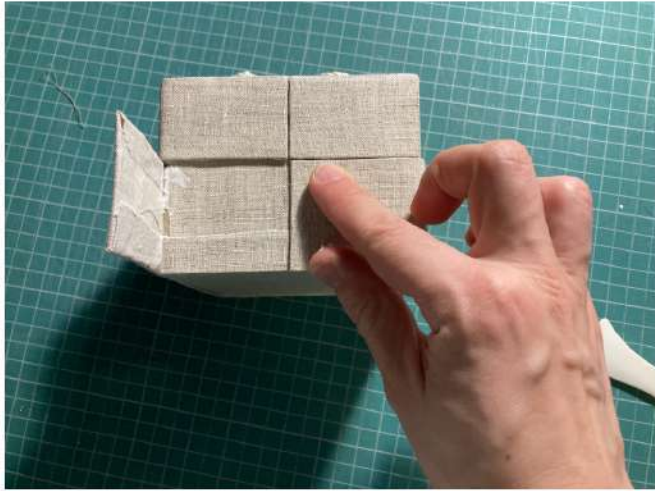
Check if the ends meet well, if not, lightly and gently stretch along the cardboard element, avoiding overstretching. Make the fitting once again and check how well the ends meet.



Apply some PVA glue with a synthetic brush to the reverse side of the cardboard "wrap".



Check the evenness of the glue spread and set the cardboard "wrap" around the lid part.



On accomplishing the upper part.
Process the same working with the
bottom one.



Well done!
The ends should meet well on the
backside.
Wrap the box with elastics to secure the
position of the "wrapping" and let it dry
overnight.



Slightly give some creasing to the edge of
the "wrap" (as shown in the photograph).
Do this with the upper edge and the
bottom one.

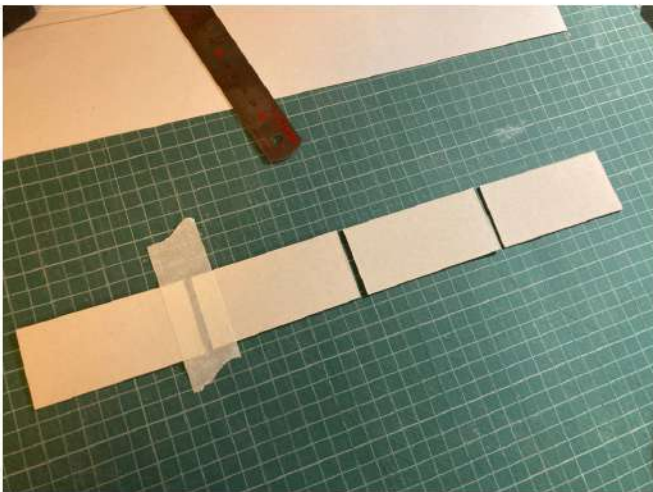
Lesson 8



We have almost finished!

What is left is the "interior".

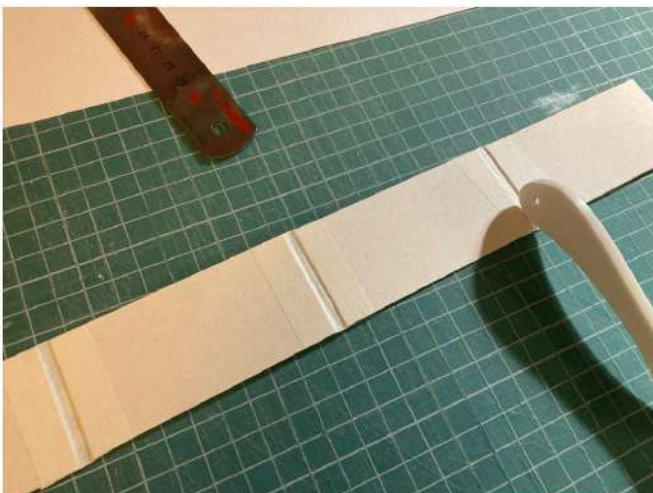
Here you will use the white cardboard again (the one you have recently used), cotton fabric and watercolour paper. Measure the inner spacing of the box between the sides (the bottom part).



If the exact space in between the sides is 9 cm, the length of a cardboard piece you cut of the cardboard to form the inner border should be at least 2 mm shorter. Its height should be a bit higher than the box side, and peep out of it to give stability while box closing. So, make the element 4mm higher than the box side.

I cut four pieces size 8.8 x 4cm.

You might have the same measurements, but it is better to check twice.



Set the cardboard pieces in a line, minding 2 - 2.5mm spacing between them. Secure with masking tape.

Press in the spacing with creasing tool.



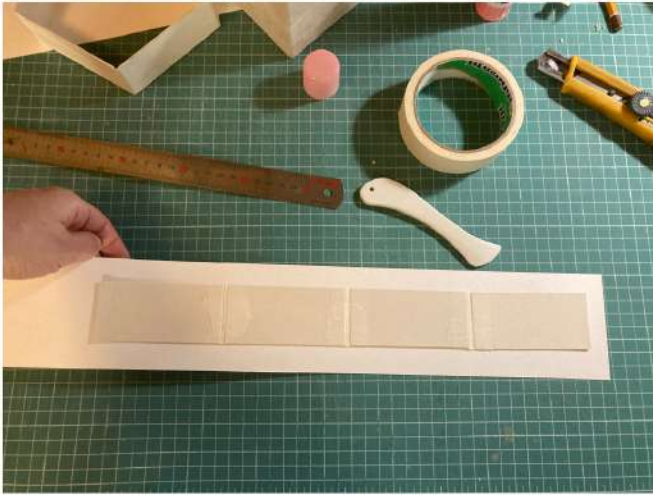
Process the fitting. If the inside border comes in well. Leave it as it is. If you feel that the border is considerably bigger and it appears complicated to insert it. Take the border out and cut one millimeter each part (vertically make it narrower), to let it come well inside the box.



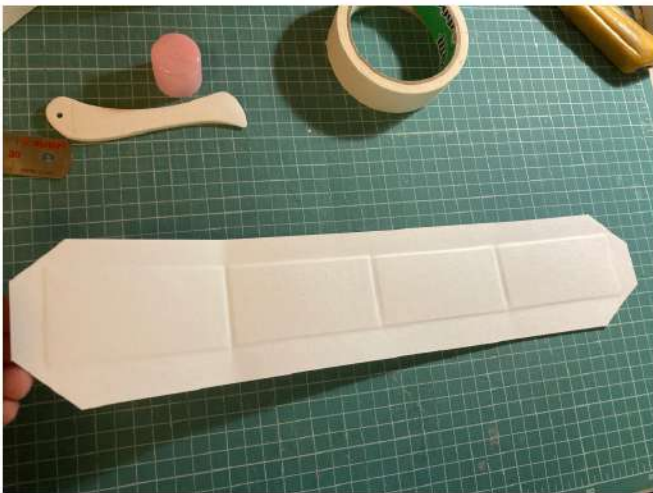
Check out again.
Well done!
Come easily in, now we need to cover it with watercolour paper.



Cut one long piece of watercolour paper to cover the inside border with it. Do it just the same way as you have done recently while covering the border with fabric.
Apply some glue (glue stick) onto the cardboard piece. And cover it with the piece of watercolour paper.



Now the border is almost done.

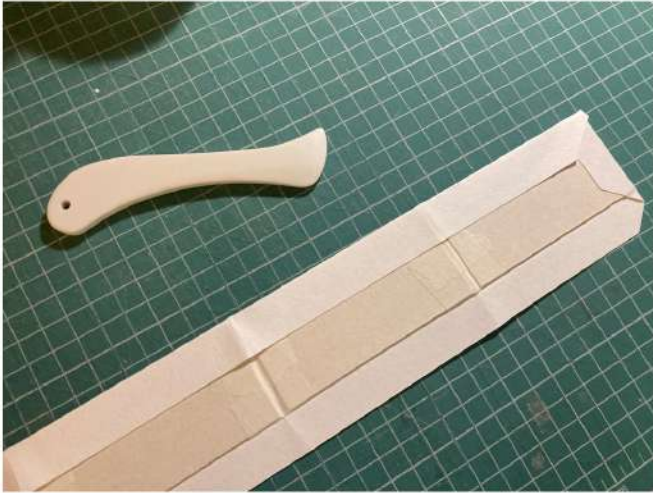


Fold the allowance (upper one to the reverse side, the lower one to the face side) and crease/press in the spacings.

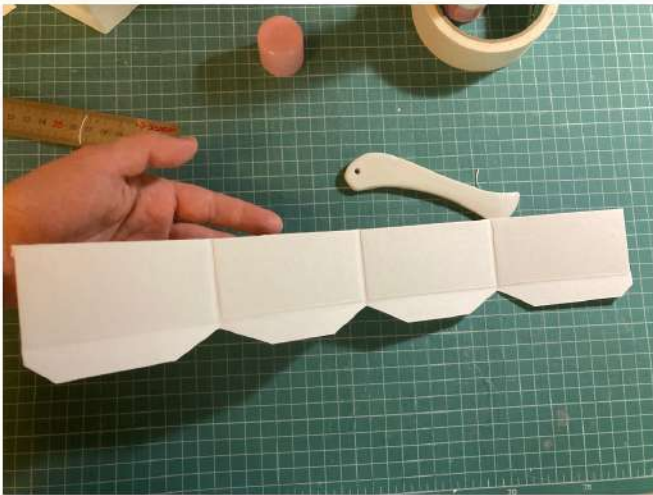


Cut off the excess allowance of the corners and glue on the sides as it is shown.

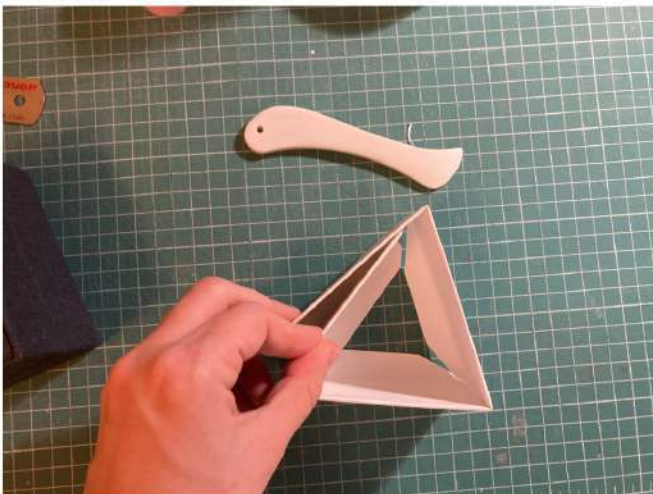
First glue the shortest ones.



Fold the paper allowance to the reverse side and glue it onto it.



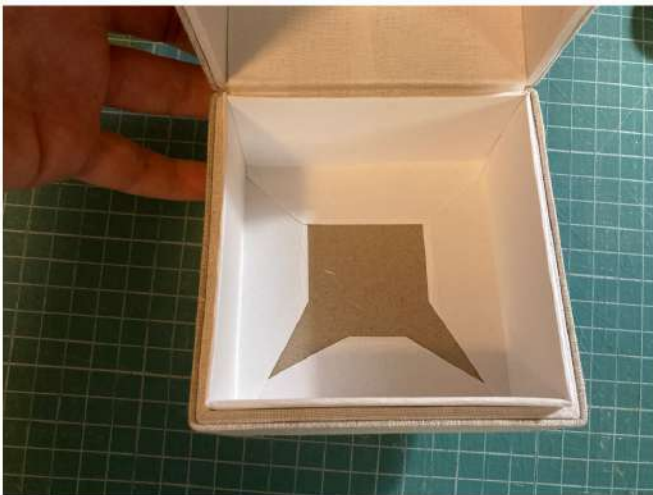
The lower part should fold in TO the face. The segments in the corners should be cut out to provide even folding (see the photograph).



Prepare for the inserting.
Fold the inside border the way it is shown in the photograph.



Insert and check if it comes well.



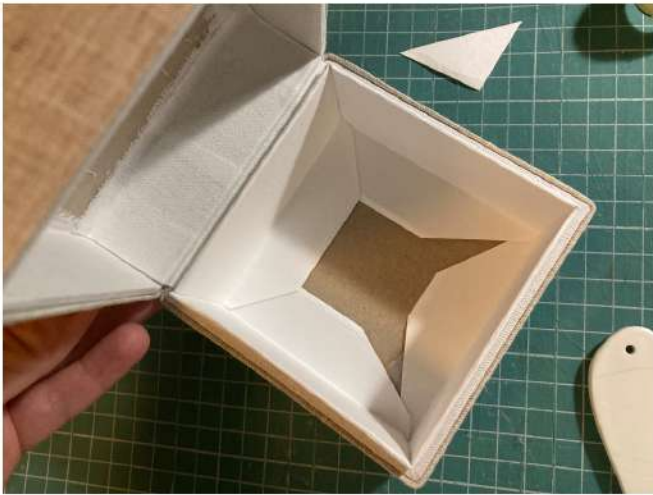
Flatten the allowance of paper in the corners of the bottom.
Set the border and check how it looks.



Now apply some glue (PVA). Spread the glue onto the sides of the bottom part of the box and the corners.



Spread the glue onto the backside. Be very accurate.



Set in the inside border the way you did while fitting it in.



Now press the sides and corners. Let it dry.



Now you need to cover the bottom part with cardboard. Measure the space between the sides of the box.



Fit the cut-out square in the box. Check if it comes in and out well.



Spread the glue onto the square piece and cover with a piece of white cotton fabric (the same as you have used before).



Now work with the allowance, cut the excess in the corners.



Fold the allowance of the fabric to the reverse side (each side) and glue.



Now the square is ready to cover the bottom part.



Apply some glue (PVA) using a synthetic brush. All along the bottom. Be accurate, try not to stain the sides.



Insert the square and press it in the corners and in the centre too.



Now work with the lid.
Measure the space between the sides.



Cut the cardboard square according to the recent measurements. Fit it in.

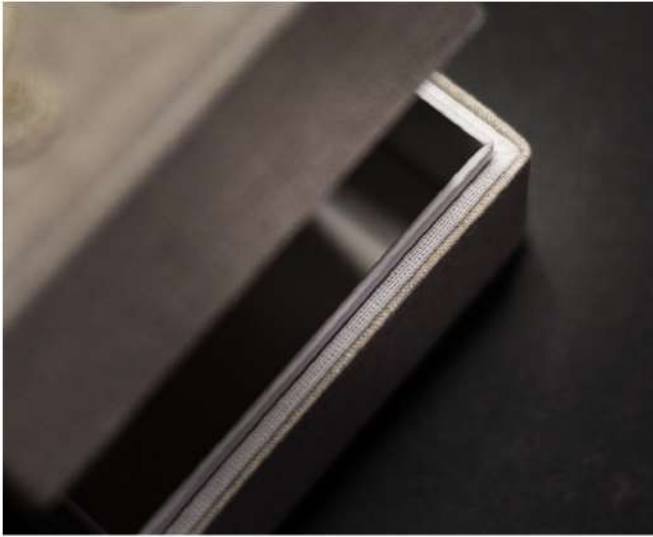


Apply some glue (PVA). Spread it with a brush



Cover the square with a piece of white cotton fabric - the way you did previously while processing the bottom part.

The lid is ready!
Leave the box for a while (overnight) to let it dry.



Well, take a look inside.



And outside.



And a close-up.
Congratulations with a big job!
I hope that you find it interesting and, in
a way, emotionally rewarding.

Creativity and various kinds of arts and crafts are quite important components of human life and healthcare. Most of the time, art is a tool to explore, develop, practice and express creativity, while the way art effects human mind is more valuable.

Decades of research have provided more than a sufficient amount of data to prove that creative activities impact everything from overall academic achievement, social and emotional development to neural systems that produce a broad spectrum of benefits ranging from fine motor skills to emotional balance improvement.

Quite simply, arts and crafts are invaluable to our proper functioning and, I hope, that through these simple lessons, together, we have become more emotionally stable and kind.

Stay safe! Stay healthy!

Thank you!