
Rice Paper Lanterns with Heather Ross

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- I've always loved the look of rice paper lanterns so I was really thrilled to find out that it's actually really simple to make them yourself. Some very, very basic electrical equipment and wiring know how and this wonderful calligraphy paper that comes on a roll, which is perfect for building a shade. I've embellished mine with some hot pink ink using really, really basic painting techniques, but you can really make them out of anything and we're gonna talk more about that later. My pull chain is just a bit of embroidery thread with these fun little pom-poms and a bell. Because when it's dark and you're trying to find the light you can sort of swat around and find the bell. Turn on your light. We've got a finished one hanging over there with polka dots. That's potato stamping. This one we did with a brush ^and I'm gonna show you some other options as well.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- The materials needed to make our rice paper lantern can be found in almost any hardware store, art supply store. You might need to order a few things online, but you'll see. It's a pretty basic collection of stuff. I do need some specialty stuff from the hardware store, in the electrical department. You can buy these individually at your own store, or you can order them as a kit, and the link is listed right here in this project on creativebug. Briefly, you'll need a lock nut, a T rod, a washer lock, a washer, a hex nut, and this is a socket. It's in three pieces with a pull chain. You'll also need a light bulb, any wattage will work. I kind of like to keep it on the lower side, 25, 45 wattage is nice. A Phillips head screwdriver, this will come as part of your kit, if you buy them through the link that's available. This is a cord, an electric cord, with a plug on one end, and two loose wires on the other, which I know is a little intimidating, but it's pretty simple setup once we get going. You'll also need some lampshade rings, some wires. These come as small as a few inches, two, three inches? And as large as about 24 inches, and they're great. And you want the one that has the small ring in the center. That's what we're going to use, and it also has a little bit of a recess on the bottom. You'll also need rice paper? Which is sold through art stores online. You can find it sometimes in larger art stores, but you'll probably have to order it online. This is calligraphy paper. If you seen the calligraphy rolls, the Japanese or Chinese brush calligraphy. It's made on paper like this, which is why it's narrow and comes in a long roll. This is 15 inches, which is a great width. If you can find wider, even better. You're gonna cut it to the size you need based on the diameter of your lantern. So you're gonna need some paper scissors. To glue the paper to the wire, you can use decoupage glue, Mod Podge, anything that dries clear on paper will work just fine. This is a nice one because it has a brush in the cap, so it's super handy. To stamp on our paper, to decorate on our paper, we're gonna use some potatoes, so I've got a couple different size potatoes and a nice, sharp paring knife. I've also got some foam brushes in a couple of different sizes, and some paints. I'm kind of on this fluorescent kick right now, so I have this nice neon pink, and then another neons with pinkish orange. For our pull cord, which is the little guy that hangs down, I just gathered up a nice little assortment of options. I have some brightly colored embroidery floss, some moony little beads that I think will be really nice on the glow in the dark stars lantern, cute little erasers that I'm going to turn into tips on my pull chain, some furry little pom-poms, some bells, and then I'll need an

embroidery needle, a needle with a nice, large eye in order to thread all of these things onto my floss, and pull up the chain. So I think that's it. Let's get going.

Chapter 3 - Create Light Bulb Socket and Prep Shade Materials

Assemble light bulb socket hardware

- Once you understand the basics of how to make a light bulb go on, you'll come up with a million different ideas for lighting. We want to attach our lightbulb socket on to the top ring from our shade. Now, when your shade rests, or hangs, you want the ring to be slightly lower, the ring on the inside, to be slightly lower than the ring on the outside. You see how it's recessed like that? That's the position you wanna be working in. We're gonna start with our T rod, and we are going to thread our T rod into the top of our socket. There's a little screw here that is there specifically to keep the T rod tight, so we're gonna start with it loosened up all the way. Then you're gonna take your T rod and you're gonna screw it in to the top of your socket. And you'll feel it kinda running against that knot. I can tighten that just enough to keep it in place, but not all the way. Next, we're gonna take our hex nut and we're gonna screw that on. I choose brass components because I just liked the way they looked with the gold cord. The color options are pretty limitless. You can do clear, black, silver, sort of an antiqued bronze. You can even paint them. Once your hex nut is in place, you're gonna add a washer, and then a washer lock. Like so. And after those two items go on, then you can thread your shade wire over that and use your lock nut to hold it all in place. I'm gonna use my Phillips-head screwdriver, and I'm gonna go back to that little screw and tighten it up, which is gonna really help to hold everything in place. The next step is to take my electrical cord with my two loose wires, and thread it through the top here, and just pull it out a few inches. I like to make little hooks on my wires. It makes it a little easier to put them around the screws. And those screws are the ones on the bottom of my socket. They should already be loosened up a bit, but you can loosen them up a little more. Your wires, it doesn't matter which one goes on which for this type of wiring. Then I'm gonna use my Phillips-head screwdriver to tighten that into place. I wanna really tight hold on that, so... Oop. And tighten it up until they're nice and tight. The last part of my socket is this little bit. You can find the little u-shaped opening. That's gonna slide in, sometimes you have to force it a little, right over that pull chain. And then, I can pull my wire back through, and push this into place. Once everything's in place, you can tighten up your lock nut at the top, too. Get a nice, nice, firm seal. Now all we need is our light bulb. We're gonna take it out while we put our shade on, but we're ready to start making our shade.

Measure and fold rice paper

- So remember in math class when your teacher told you that pi was this incredibly important number, and you rolled your eyes. This is the moment in your life that you will use that information. Well, if you want. You don't actually even have to (chuckles). We're gonna use our lampshade wire. The one that goes on the bottom. So not the one we just put the wiring into but the one, the other one doesn't have anything going on in the center. And we've got (wire clanging on table) a roll of rice paper here. I'm gonna take off that protective coating and put that aside. You need a nice long table to do this in, because pi, as it turns out is actually a really big number. And you're just gonna roll this paper out. And I've got (paper rustling) these paints here just to hold everything in place. So I've got this little mark, this little welded mark on my lampshade wire. I'm gonna start there kind of close to my close to my edge of my paper. And I'm gonna roll it. (children's voices) Until that same little mark hits the paper again. Then I'm gonna add about an inch and a half. (wire clanging) My

finger there. (children playing) I'm gonna eye ball it. Just gonna cut (paper ripping) paper to that length. Cutting as straight as I can. (scissors clunk) And now I'm ready to fold the edge. Now, if I had used pi I would have taken the diameter and I would have multiplied it ... So here's my diameter. I would have multiplied that by 3.14 to come up with the circumference. And that would be the same as this measurement. Plus I would have added a little intro overlap. So you can do it either way. You definitely want a little bit of overlap. So don't cut it exactly to pi. You need at least an inch there. (paper rustling) The next step in preparing the paper to go on the wire ... And you want to do this before you do any kind of printing or painting or an embellishment of any kind, because it's really tough to do afterwards. Is folding up the edge of my paper by about three ... Between 3/8th of an inch and an inch. It really doesn't have to be exact. I've got this nice thin wire. This is the edge that's gonna get wrapped around that wire. And I'm gonna fold it all on the edge. And I'm gonna do that to the top and the bottom. Now rice paper has sort of a rough side and a smooth side. Right now I'm folding this with the rough side up and the smooth side down. It really isn't gonna make a huge difference. You might find that when you're gluing it on to the wire, the rough side, the fibers grab each other with the glue a little more easily, and it goes around the wire a little more easily. Or you might find that having the rough side on the outside of your shade looks better, because it's just a little more textured. I would say to experiment a little bit with both. But either way, you're gonna be able to glue it onto the wire. (paint knocks on table) So don't worry too much about which one you end up with. (paper rustling) That polished smooth side is meant (background noise) to really work well with our calligraphy brush. (children's voices heard) Okay, now I'm ready to embellish. I'm gonna do some stamping and some painting, but you really can do anything you want on this. You can flip it over and put it in front of your three year old with some magic markers. You can paste photos, you could collage different things from newspapers or magazines or articles. Anything that could stand up to modge podge, you can put on this paper. Anything that you can paint on paper with. Any kind of paint or ink. If you want to write someone a letter or print something out of your own (claps hands together) inkjet printer on rice paper. You can do all of those things. We're gonna stay sort of simple today and do some potato printing and some painting with brushes. But really use your imagination.

Chapter 4 - Decorate Lamp Shade

Print rice paper shade

- One of the best ways to embellish your rice paper lanterns is with potato printing. Potatoes are like nature's printing blocks. They have a starchy, viscous kind of fluid on them when you cut them in half that both collects, but then releases ink, instead of soaking it up. So, it works perfectly for just really basic stamping. I've got just a medium sized potato here, and what I'm gonna do is show you how to cut it into a star shape to print some stars on this shade. You can also just cut it in half and use it to print dots, like the shade back here, or use a half a potato to stamp along the bottom to get the scalloped edge that you can also see here. But this, I'm gonna make it a little more complicated, I'm gonna turn it into a star, because I'd really like to have glow in the dark stars printed on a rice paper lantern. I think that would be really cool. So the first thing you want to do is cut it in half. Now, remember when you were in elementary school and you were taught how to draw a star? Where you made lines and a triangle and then connected the sides? We're basically gonna do the same thing. We're gonna start by slicing a little triangle. Definitely have a grownup do this. And then I'm gonna use my paring knife to pull out each corner You can cut almost anything into a potato, any design you want. You'll notice that my star is imperfect. I actually think that adds kind of a nice

quality to it, but if you want to make it a little more perfect, you can. You can also find a lot of things around your house that'll give sort of a nice shape when stamped. Fish, you could stamp with fish, I love fish prints. So, I made a couple of different stars, because I think it's nice to have a little variation, and I made them in a couple of different sizes. I'm gonna work in pink today, with my stars. Just wanna get sort of a nice smooth, thin layer. Then I'm gonna take one of my stars and I'm gonna carefully, because I don't want to get a lot of ink in the areas that aren't showing, I'm gonna carefully spread it onto my star. And then I can turn it upside down, just press but don't move it around. I think a little bit of, having a little bit of wonkiness is actually a really nice element on these shades. I don't think about them should be too perfect. And the point is, after all, that it's handmade. Now I'm gonna use my other star. It's amazing how much just a little bit of variation will add to the overall design, rather than making them all the same. If I stamp a second time without reapplying ink, I'll just get a much more faded design. The change in scale, when you're adding variation in any design, will really add a lot of dimension overall. All right, that looks pretty good. I could always add a second color or play around a little bit with another design, but I'm liking this. I think it's a little bit simple and very cool. So now I need to let it dry. If you don't have the patience to let it dry just on the table out here in the air, you can use a blow dryer, it's a great trick. It works really, really well, it'll take maybe five minutes.

Chapter 5 - Assemble and Finish Lamp

Glue rice paper to lampshade rings

- So, I speeded up the drying process a little bit with a hair dryer, and now I'm ready to glue my paper onto my wire. I'm gonna flip my paper over so that my printed side is facing down. I'm just gonna weight my paper down a little bit, because it's windy. And then it's really important to make sure you're gluing your wiring in the right direction. I want my socket and my pull chain facing towards me while I glue along the top. So, I can open up the top flap here right where I folded it and then I'm gonna brush on a little bit of glue. Just right inside that crease. And you can be pretty liberal. Rice paper gets really soft when you add glue to it, so you don't want to put so much on that it's going to turn completely into liquid, but you can be pretty liberal with it. Now, just like I rolled it to measure the paper, I'm gonna roll it to glue the paper onto it. Do like a couple of inches at a time. Don't worry about getting a little extra glue somewhere, dropping a little bit on your lantern, you're not gonna see it in the end. There's something about this hot pink paint and this gold electrical cord that is such a great combination. I've just loved this trend lately with these really hot, fluorescent colors against very natural ivory and cream colored grounds. I think it's so beautiful. A project like this is a nice way to sort of do something a little trendy, because it's something that you can always take down. It's not such a permanent part of a room. You can make these for birthday parties or weddings using colors of your choice. You can print big initials on them. And, at some point, it just becomes easier to do this. My edge overlap is just gonna climb right over. It looks like I could use a little bit more glue right there. That overlap's always a tough spot, because you're gluing through four layers of paper instead of two. So you can see, it's not... I'm not making it perfectly even. It just doesn't need to be. The final step in this lantern is mashing it all up. The whole paper becomes wrinkled, so little wrinkles up here are not gonna show. Okay, we're all set. I'm gonna let it dry just like this. Most glues take about an hour to dry completely. Again, I can speed up the process with a blow dryer if I want to. I'm gonna leave it sitting here just like this, so that when I'm ready to glue on the bottom one, and you can do that before the other side glues completely, but let it dry a little bit. So, once my top wire is glued in, I can put it down on that end and I can add my bottom wire. This is

a lot easier to do with a second person, so I'm gonna ask Kelly to come in and hold it for me. If you can just hold it just like that, sort of at my chest level, it'll be a lot easier for me and my glue and my wire to find a spot. Brush a little glue on. Okay, Kelly, if you could just rotate it slightly. You can try gluing the wire, too. It's hard to manage the paper. Either or. Remember, it's gonna keep popping off until it's completely dry, so you just have to kinda keep mushing it back into place, working a couple inches at a time. You can put rubber gloves on if you want, but the glue will wash right off. Once you've got your edge glued and folded, you're ready to hang to dry. It takes about an hour. Again, you can speed it up again with the blow dryer. Don't worry about any of these creases or wrinkles you're seeing. Ignore them, they're gonna go away during the final step.

Create pull chain and finish

- So once my paint is dry, which won't take too long, especially if you speed things up with a blow dryer. Now we're ready for my absolute favorite part of this whole project. It's smashing your lantern. It gives it a really, really nice texture, hides any flaws, and makes it into something that you can actually put away. And I'm just squeezing those rings together, top and bottom. Don't worry too much about that overlap, that's gonna find its own way. Rice paper is a lot stronger than it looks, so don't be shy. And then when you pull it apart, got all of this lovely movement in it, which I think is so pretty. Now we're ready to put on our pull chain. We can smash it down again. Now since I've got these cute, kind of hot red, pink stars, I think I'm gonna use a little orange pompom, and then maybe a small pink pompom, and a little gold bell. And I'm gonna use this embroidery floss that has kind of the same color as my stars. You don't need it to be too, too long. Maybe start with a good 12, 18 inches. I use it in its full thickness. And I use one of these nice wide embroidery needles with a big hole in it. Pretty easy to thread. Now, pompoms can be a little bit tricky. I'm gonna make a knot at the end of my thread. And then I'm gonna put my needle right through the center of my pompom. It should hold. I'm gonna have to trim that thread, or I can leave it if I'd like. Then I'm gonna do the same with my little pink pompom. Right through the center. And then I'm gonna hang a little bell. And then I can pull my needle right off, and tie my thread to my pull chain. I love the sound of a little bell. I think that's really sweet. We'll get this hung up over a rafter, and we'll come back tonight and see how it looks all lit up. They look especially pretty grouped together. You can use a variety of different colors, or stay in one color story, which is sort of what we did today. You can print anything you want on them, hang them for parties, dinners, leave them up for weeks or just put them up for a special occasion. They're just a lot of fun to make and to own.