

# Treasure Box by Heidi Mehta



Heidi Mehta

I am a printmaker and a textiles artist based in Wales. I am interested in how I can translate my work into alternative objects. I am always drawn towards presenting my work in different ways, through stitched books, altered books, decorated boxes or sculptural pieces.

When I came across the Treasure Box Project I was intrigued with the concept and ordered a box. I remained in curious anticipation for what my little box might contain. As an artist you select your items carefully for a project, happy accidents often happen but your subject matter is very specific. Often I stumble across something that inspires me to create a piece or body of work but it is rare that an artist is given items and asked to create something from them - so I was intrigued...

**Inspiration:**

My box arrived and upon opening I found old book pages, two pieces of card with graded tones of brown and grey sample yarns, numerous sized pieces of sandpaper, a foam piece of sandpaper, a large and small piece of foam mount card, two wooden rectangles, a small plastic ladder and a small St Pauls Cathedral ornament. What a mix of items! Immediately I was drawn towards the book pages and the yarn samples, but no ideas or inspiration surfaced. I packed the items away so I could deliberate on them for a while. Every few days I would pick up the box and take out the items, rearrange them on the table to see if inspiration would hit.

On the last occasion I looked in the box, I was again drawn towards the book pages and the yarns but this time also the sandpaper. It was then I decided that these items would form the criteria in which to base my Treasure Box project on. The colour pallet of these items also worked well together and complimented a project I was developing which included items I had collected from the beach. The book pages also tied in with a recent book binding and altered book course I had taken part in. So all the pieces were now coming together.

### **Printing:**

Using the sandpaper and the yarns with some of the objects found on the beach, such as seaweed, shells, pebbles, and debris I created a number of textured collograph plates from which I created prints. The collograph plates varied in size and detail and from these plates I printed blind embossed prints as well as multiple colour prints. I then developed the theme further by making and printing photopolymer etchings incorporating my detailed close up photographs of shells and sea urchins. I lastly printed monoprints inspired by the objects found on the beach.

Once I was satisfied with my collection of handmade prints I set about planning the best way of displaying them. The concept of my prints being part of a Treasure Box helped me

focus. All of these prints would form the pages of a handmade concertina book which would fit inside the box-each time the box was opened the treasure would be revealed. The concertina book also complimented incorporating the book pages included in my original Treasure Box items. Specific sentences or words were cut from these pages along with paragraphs of text and these were secured to my printed pages. To finish the book I added covers from a second hand book and added final hand drawn details of sea spray and water marks in an opposite colour with screen-printing, thus concluding my Treasure Beach Book.



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