DIY (Do-It-Yourself)

Catherine Vienneau

What is DIY?

This term is pretty self-explanatory, referring to "just about anyone doing just about anything for themselves, rather than getting someone to do it for them" (Evans, 2006, p. 6-7). A general web search for "DIY" underlines everything from home renovations to crafts, gardening to music, food to self-publishing. This expression, first used in a magazine in 1912, exploded during the 1950s, mostly involving home renovations. It provided a sense of independence, creativity and was cost-effective (Evans, 2006, p. 7). Overall, its scope tends to be quite broad and overwhelming. However, there is a greater ethic at work for DIY in which its resurgence can relate to crafts. This DIY crafting ethic is summarised by Spencer (2005) in five terms: Social, individuality, money-saving, socially conscientious, environmental. Crafting has become a great social activity, a creative outlet encouraging individuality, a way to create awareness of corporate branding and marketing and finally, a clever way to reuse old materials in a environmentally-conscious world (Spencer, 2005, p. 68). Overall, DIY crafting is not simply creating something with your hands but also becomes a personal ethos and conscious choice.

Why DIY for Teens?

With an emphasis on creativity, expression and self-sufficiency, DIY is a great outlet and philosophy for teens. Although there is much variety and crossover within this vast crafting area, the overarching goal is to allow teens, regardless of their age, gender, race or orientation, to express themselves and reflect their own personal style and personality in any crafty form they may choose.

References

Evans, S. (2006). Old-time do it yourself. In Porter, I., *DIY in HFX* (6-9). Halifax: Iris Porter.

Spencer, A. (2005). *DIY: The rise of lo-fi culture*. New York: Marion Boyars.

Key DIY Crafting Links

Instructables (http://www.instructables.com/craft) – This website is a DIY crafting essential. Not only are there hundreds of ideas to choose from, but also clear and visual instructions for each project, which is a great asset to any new crafter. Gender neutral, this website does not discriminate and can cater to a great audience both young and old. While it is a little hard to navigate, its search function is excellent and you can choose to find a particular project, or explore the many sub-categories. You may also want to purchase their publication *The Best of Instructables*, which carries some of the most popular and fun projects.

Craftster (www.craftster.com) – Similar to getcrafty.com, this website not only carries hundreds of DIY craft projects, articles and city guides, but also a forum community for all of your questions and ideas! You can search through projects in the various sub-categories. Once again, it tends to cater

more towards a female audience. There are a few too many advertisments displayed on the pages, which take away from the main crafting visuals, but this is still a great place to get ideas.

GetCrafty.com (http://getcrafty.com/) – This website, assembled by a variety of crafty writers from around the globe, contains forums, stories, blogs, pictures and articles associated with DIY crafting. Clear and easy to navigate, this resource is highly interactive and searchable once you become a member for free. A great section of this site is the "crafty city guides"; while there are currently only two, growth is inevitable and you could even contribute! This site tends to cater more towards a female audience, and visuals aren't quite as emphasised as seen in other sites.

Project

DIY Screenprinting

This project can be demonstrated at the library, but due to the length of time it takes for drying the prints, it would be better to have the project done in stages (i.e. during the course of a summer reading club). You may also want to simply provide the instructions, or provide a take-and- make home bag with some of the essential items (embroidery hoops and fabric). This project is not overly expensive and is highly creative.
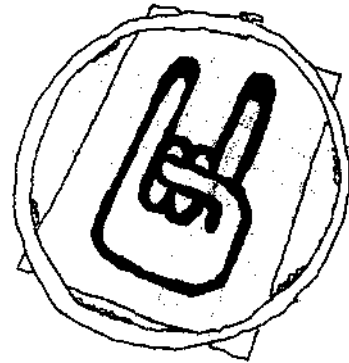

What you need:

- ✓ Two large embroidery hoops (found at craft stores, at "dollar stores" or if you're lucky, at thrift stores)
- ✓ Mesh fabric, such as hosiery (make sure it is clean and free of any particles that could clog it)
- ✓ A simple design of your choice, printed off a computer
- ✓ Any plain item of clothing, although a t-shirt is a good place to start
- ✓ Mod Podge glue (found at craft stores)
- ✓ Fabric ink (found at craft stores)

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1. Pick your design, making sure it's not too detailed, and print it out in the exact size you desire.

2. Next, stretch the mesh fabric over the inner hoop and place the outer hoop over it, making sure that the fabric is pulled tight between both hoops.

3. With the fabric facing down, place the hoop over the image and tape the corners to ensure that it will not budge. Trace your image onto the mesh material.

4. Use the Mod Podge with a paintbrush to paint all over the NEGATIVE spaces (i.e. don't touch the areas that you've traced, but surround it). Wait until it is completely dry; you may speed up the process with a hair dryer!

5. Place a piece of cardboard in the middle of your t-shirt (or behind your item) to prevent the ink from bleeding through. Place your dry design against the desired area, fabric facing down. It's a good idea to place weights or rocks on either side of the hoop, ensuring that it won't budge.

6. Take your fabric ink and place a small glop on your screen; spread it across and cover your design using a piece of cardboard. Peel it SLOWLY off of your t-shirt; let your image dry.

7. Once it is dry, place a piece of paper over it and pass an iron at medium heat over your design for 2-3 minutes; the heat sets the image. There you go, your very own fashion design!

TIP:

For visual aids as well as an instructional video for this project, go to: http://www.instructables.com/id/D.I.Y.-Screen-Printing/

Don't forget to reach out to your community by asking around and investigating for any alternative/DIY movement; you might be surprised to discover an underground culture you never knew existed, establishing new contacts! Having a guest come in and demonstrate a DIY project would not only be insightful and fun, but also displays a good outreach initiative on the library's part.

And...

See **Appendix I** at the end of this issue of *YA Hotline* for an annotated bibliography of DIY resources, links and other cool stuff intended for a female DIY audience, 16 and up. Print it out and display it in your teen section, reference desk or at the circulation desk!