

Walk Cards

by Valerie Bell

These cards can be whatever size you want; mine, as Shelley Rhodes suggested on her Fibre Arts Take Two course, could easily be held in your hand whilst out for a walk. My approach had to be slightly different as using two crutches makes marking the cards on a walk impossible. I can often remember the fissures and cracks in the limestone rocks; the phone camera is a good recorder.

My cards are 3 x 5" and never blank. I use micropore and fabric medical tapes on the cards for texture; small areas are painted with emulsion or gesso (both change the texture when paints and crayon are added to these areas). Odd pieces of text or hessian can be applied to the cards. I use an acrylic matt gel to stick them, being aware that I need to add hand stitching later. At present, most of my walk cards are a reflection of the Yorkshire Dales landscape so a quick wipe with a used tea bag adds colour. I did purchase a small cutter to round my card corners. Other than that, I am using materials from my stash (right).



The cards are then marked with lines to show areas of trees and vegetation, gates and paths that are on that walk; it could just be the bright green moss on the dry stone walls – no drawing skill required. By the time you add scrim to represent trees and strands of hessian looking like tree roots, plus a paint wash, a picture of your walk starts to emerge. I do choose a colour palette that represents the season we are in, and try to add similar materials to each. I have started to make holes with incense sticks to distress certain areas in my cards.

This method of working has certainly given me a new way of looking and working my textiles – since my unfortunate fall, I am not able to do machine work and certainly could not spend the hours on machine embroidery that I used to do. The Fibre Arts course with Shelley has given me the confidence to work differently; I often hand sew marks on my cards. Instead of art paper, I use cotton in the same way; the use of papers, materials and paint is all still very experimental. Mistakes are cut up and reused – it is all so free. On my April JQ walk card, I used a light dressing of wax that made it impossible for me to use my usual blanket stitch edging. I was very apprehensive about posting my first couple of mark making cards as JQs this year (shown on next page). It's a way of working that I am enjoying more than I could ever have imagined; the group response has often been

positive which has helped my confidence.

My observations have improved as I go around; marks with threads, crayons and paint are in everyday use. A small Gelli plate is part of my sewing kit, as are pliers to pull the needle through.

Once the weather improves and I get a trip to Whitby, the starting colour palette will be blue, grey and yellow washes; hopefully, these will be included in this year's JQs.

I am so grateful that, through my course with Shelley Rhodes, I have found a way to continue with textile art albeit with media that over the years I have purchased at shows, never really embracing them until now.

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Below: Walk Card JQs for April, May and June. Top row, fronts; bottom row, backs

