

The final word

This issue, Kylie Minogue fan Anna Smolander shares her crafty story with us



Anna Smolander

I started crafting eight years ago when my son was born. That year my mother-in-law bought me a cardmaking kit from Ideal World and I was hooked. I now own thousands of pounds worth of crafty stash and I have just about managed to fill the house. I have had my crafty ups and downs like everybody, and this year I was stuck. I found myself feeling totally uninspired. Then Kylie Minogue realised her latest album, *Kiss Me Once*, and I set myself a challenge – to craft her entire album. It is an ongoing challenge. I really stretched myself creatively, and from project one have tried new things, developed new skills and I'm teaching myself to draw now. I can only thank my idol for getting me out of the rut, giving me tons of creative inspiration and, of course, providing me with the best soundtrack ever!

Unfortunately, I do not have a craft room so my crafty stash has slowly taken over our living room. My desk is piled so high with my stash, drawings and projects that I now craft on our dining table. It's not a mess if I know where it all is – right?

I have been a Kylie fan for a long, long time. Since *Locomotion* and *I Should Be So Lucky* burst into the scene when I was seven. I'm 34 now, which makes me feel so old!



In May, Kylie retweeted my professional artist partner Ricky's *Kiss Me Once* drawing and around 70,000 people have viewed it! I'm very proud of him, and I'm drawing now, too, with him watching my progress closely.



This drawing has been favoured and retweeted by Dannii Minogue!



The Kylie challenge is going well. I think I have done seven projects so far.

My favourite crafting techniques are die-cutting, drawing and stamping. I'm also into making my own paper flowers and these feature in nearly all of my projects. I don't think I could live without my Cuddlebug and my Spellbinders dies. I adore Hunkydory, especially the Art Deco and Christmas collections. I also love using all docrafts products. When I'm drawing, my Derwent pencils are a must have.

My partner is my biggest influence in art and craft, plus my close friends also craft. I used to be a member of a craft group but I work so I've stopped going now, and instead spend all my free time crafting and drawing. My dream is to do an art foundation course one day and become a full-time artist and crafter – who knows!



If you would like to share your story with us, email papercraftessentials@practicalpublishing.co.uk

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This issue, Charley Walker shares her crafty story with us



Charley Walker



I'm 22 years old and I live in Berkshire. I'm a disabled crafter and Stampin' Up! Hobby Demonstrator. I have been doing arts and crafts since I was little. I was originally introduced to art as a form of therapy when I was younger. It was, at the beginning, about helping my co-ordination and then to keep my arms, hands and wrists as strong as possible for as long as possible. When I was younger I had speech problems and found arts and crafts a great way to express myself. I studied Art & Photography at College and have recently signed up to be a Hobby Demonstrator with Stampin' Up!

I am very passionate about bringing art and crafts to disabled people and those with other health needs. I believe in creating products and projects that make arts and

crafts accessible for all. I have been emailing various craft companies and magazines to see if they are interested in my mission as well.

Photography is another great passion of mine and I am saving up to get a mini professional booth to take better-quality pictures of the crafts I have made. Currently they are just basic pictures but I am slowly increasing my supplies in order to make better-quality products etc.

I was lucky enough to win a grant a few years ago to try and make a business of selling my handmade cards and eventually branch out into more crafts, but sadly health and money got in the way of things.

I am now a busy student doing my Health & Social Care degree with The Open University. I work at Slough Resource Centre as their

activity organiser and include arts and crafts within their daily lives. We all have a great time making new things and trying new techniques. Many of the service users have speech problems and communicate greatly through arts and crafts. I am also in touch with local community centres to offer classes for people with disabilities and enable them to discover arts and crafts and grow their current skills.

My current personal craft mission is to create my wedding supplies. I am very excited but will not be sharing these pictures as it is a surprise! After August 29th next summer I will be happy to share all the pictures with everyone. My partner is a painter and used to do woodwork so he will also be sharing things on our new Facebook page –

Zak's Creations.

I do my crafting in bed with a tray mug bought me from Hobbycraft. I recently bought a Vagabond when my Cuttlebug became too hard to use independently. My condition gets worse as I get older so my crafting supplies and tools are forever growing and changing.

I know many people who never believe in their own talents, and as a young woman that is something I am working on every day. Each lovely comment I get builds me up bit by bit. Crafting is a real passion and offers so many different methods that anyone can find a form to enjoy, which is what I love.

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