

How to...

MAKE A STENCILLED PICNIC TOTE

Lotta Jansdotter's website describes her designs as "little plants working their way through cracks in the sidewalk. Things of simple beauty that bring relief to the urban landscape." Scandinavian born Lotta Anderson, see *Selvedge* issue 06, loves the city but everyone needs to gaze on green vistas once in a while. Picnics in the park are Lotta's solution. We love her idea of creating pretty individually printed tote bags for each guest. It's a great way to organise a children's party or a clever way to get every adult to share the load while you find your perfect place to sit – essential if your picnic leader is the indecisive type who feels the grass is always greener 100 yards ahead! www.jansdotter.com

Summer has finally arrived in Brooklyn – a time when New York and Brooklyn is truly at its best. The public parks become my extended living rooms and are wonderful places to hang out, relax and to socialize. It's where I kick off my shoes and feel the earth, smell the grass and hear the rustling of leaves. Nature is a big source of inspiration for me: in my work as a textile designer and maker, but also inspiration for a more healthy lifestyle – being in nature calms and grounds me... makes me a happier person.

Picnics are one of my favourite activities: I love food, I love spending time with good friends and, as you already know, I love hanging out in nature and, for whatever reason, the food ALWAYS tastes better out in the fresh air...

For my first picnic of the year I decided to invite my girlfriends for a Sunday afternoon in the park. I wanted to make it special, and since I love to make things I decided to create some cute picnic bags for my friends, filled with delicious handcrafted food. Fresh Brie and salami sandwiches, strawberries, orzo salad, crisps, shortbread cookies and a bottle of bubbly for each of us, all packed into a pretty tote.

I created a simple stencil design for the tote, a floral motif seemed appropriate. It is so incredibly easy to stencil print, and you can print several bags in a jiffy. You don't need expensive tools or materials to get started. I used cotton bags, easily found online. It would be lovely to also print some matching cotton napkins for... and if you feel ambitious you could print a border design on a tablecloth that could work as a picnic blanket as well.

Method

1. Start by drawing out the design and trace it with your marker onto clear acetate (some printers can print directly onto acetate). You can also use self-adhesive clear plastic (contact paper) for making fabric printing stencils.
2. Cut out your designs with a craft knife.
3. Pour a small amount of paint onto a plate.
4. Place your stencil on top of your fabric. Secure the stencil to the material using masking tape so it won't move during printing. (This is why self-adhesive plastic is so handy).
5. Dab an even amount of ink through the stencil. Several thin layers of ink is better than one thick one.
6. If you are printing more than one colour: print all of your designs in the first colour and let them dry before changing stencils. It is easier to use a separate brush or sponge for each colour. ●●●

materials, equipment and notes

- Permanent marker
- Clear plastic (acetate) or stencil paper for making the stencils. (You'll find it at craft stores and some stationery stores)
- A craft knife
- Heavy cardboard or a cutting mat to use as a cutting surface
- Pebeo Setacolor Fabric Inks
- Masking tape
- Stencil brush or sponge: stencil brushes will work best but any flat stiff-bristle brush will serve the purpose
- Cotton bags

●●● Free stencils available to download from www.selvedge.org ●●●