

Treasure Box by Kelly Richards

I first stumbled across your website on the internet while searching for art education articles. I am currently seeking work as an art teacher and like to stay up to date on what's happening "out there." I am also a freelance graphic designer, jewelry-maker and collage artist. When I read about the Treasure Box Project I was thrilled and ordered a box immediately. That night as I lay in bed trying to sleep, I felt like a child anticipating my Christmas stocking... what little treasures would I find in my box and what would I do with them?

Approximately 2 weeks later, after my box's transatlantic journey, I found it waiting for me in my mailbox. I didn't open it immediately. I wanted to wait until all my daily chores were done and then in the evening, sit down at my kitchen table, in my P.J.s, and like an archeologist, make my discovery. I was awarded with a wide variety of objects: some yarn samples; some small papers with vintage illustrations; a single book page with information about the Eider Duck; a small clear plastic cup; Modrock (a plaster of paris wrap), some brightly colored feathers; a small glass bottle; some suede fabric samples in aqua, blue and grey; a small section of a map. Hmmm... the wheels started spinning. I kept going back to the text about the Eider Duck – what the heck is an Eider Duck? I had to know more about this bird and so went to the first logical place - Wikipedia! It turns out the Eider Duck is quite a special and beautiful species. It lines its nest with its own down feathers creating a comfortable place for its eggs.

The other objects in the box all interested me but I kept coming back to that duck! I guess I have a special affinity for ducks as my first public work of art was a duck that I had drawn at age 5 and sent to the American television show Romper

Room. Now if any of you out there are familiar with Romper Room then you are aging yourself as I just did! Romper Room was popular in the early 1960's. The host of the show would invite viewers to send their artistic creations and then during the show the cameras would pan the gallery wall giving the young artist their 15 seconds of fame. I watched as a young girl, waiting expectantly for my masterpiece to appear and one day it actually did! That instant probably sealed the deal on my artistic future.

I lined the box with turquoise "Duck" tape, which I thought appropriate for the theme. I glued a photo of my great aunt feeding ducks inside a chipboard letter "D" which I covered with the text and then painted with watercolors to age it. On top of that I added a bit of lace that I had painted aqua. I included a broken piece of bronze jewelry from a previous experiment-gone-wrong with PMC. The little nest and eggs I made from polymer clay – I lined the nest with one of the feathers. I included a red rhinestone button nestled into a washer for a pop of contrasting color. The red stones represent my two sons.

All in all it was a fun project to work on. As a designer I have always enjoy being presented with a "problem" for which I must find a solution. I didn't use all of the little bits and pieces that were in the box originally but I am happy with the result and feel that my "duck art" has really come full circle.

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