

Rubber Stamps- Creative Cutting

Copyright Ursula Smith 2010

By now you should have read thru my initial tips on cutting stamp from unmounted sheets and mounting them. If not please go to my help section and find the document “Tips on Mounting Rubber Stamps” to read through those instructions first. It should be attached to the same page as this document- on [Rubber Stamping Tips page](#) the in the Help section of my web site.

The initial instructions were a bit more generic, focusing on how to cut and mount rubber stamps as they were delivered on the Rubber Stamp sheet. Once you are extremely comfortable with this process, you can get a bit more creative with your cutting and you can create new stamps of your own or customize stamps more to your liking or extend the stamps to allow them to have additional uses.

Warning- this is for Advanced Stampers only- do not attempt unless you are very comfortable cutting stamps (and are willing to risk losing a stamp if you mess up) !!

Most stamps have space in between images, even if they are delivered on the sheet as a single stamp. There are two techniques you can use to extract one image from another to alter them.

For each technique, you really want to do this on straight rubber, **not mounted rubber**. If your rubber is mounted, you can usually pull the rubber off the mounted material with only a little bit of effort. I have been told that it helps to put the rubber in the microwave for just 2 seconds to soften the glue a little bit. But personally, I never do that because I have always had luck pulling the stamp off the mounting foam. I even have done this with wood mounted stamps.

Technique 1- scissors

Using the technique outlined in my Tips for Mounting Rubber, if there is any space in between the images, you can bend the rubber and it gives a bit more room to get a pair of scissors in between the two images. It is easier if you have started the cut away from that space, in an area with a little more “open rubber”- that is, where there is no image. You can then bend, stretch and continue the cut thru the narrow section to cut the images apart.



Technique 2- using a craft knife

In the cases where the images have very little (or no) space between them, you can use a craft knife to disassemble the image.

Warning- you should be very practiced at using a craft knife AND have a new, sharp blade.

Using several shallow cuts, slowly, but surely cut between the two images. You want to cut the rubber in the same way that you use a craft knife to cut thru thick material- using small shallow cuts rather than deep, long cuts. Then repeat the process, going over your initial cuts until you make it all the way through the thickness of the rubber.

Mounting

Once the images are separated, you can then continue the process of mounting your rubber stamp onto the mounting foam. Unless you use the rubber directly on the acrylic blocks (I don't), in which case you are finished.

Trim the mounting material as close to the edges of the images as you can. This gives you the option of composing the stamps in the original manner on the acrylic block and stamping them together as they were designed.

Additional Tips

Tip- Remember to use smaller snips, as opposed to longer strokes to avoid mishaps!

Tip- If you trim your rubber and mounting foam close to the edge of an image that was designed to be used for backgrounds, it is easier to stamp it multiple times to fill a space larger than the image itself. Place the image in a corner of the Acrylic Block, and it will be much easier to line up the image for the next placement without having to use an alignment tool all the time.

Examples

If you are willing to take the risk, then read below for some ideas using my stamps.

Frames

Usually, any time I get a frame stamp that has an image inside of it, I try to remove the insides from the frame. That allows the stamp to serve a dual purpose- just a frame, the original image together with the frame, and sometimes the image inside can be used on its own, in which case it is a three-fer 😊

As an example- my Mirror Frame stamp from my Grunge Mirror and Bubble Wrap set, has an outside frame with an inside that is supposed to look like a grungy mirror or dirty glass. You can always stamp the entire image and then cut the inside out of the frame, and that is the easiest and safest way to do it.

However, I decided I wanted to use the stamps separately. This is probably the hardest example, because the two images are exactly next to each other. Most images have some space in between them so that you can get a scissor and start the cut there. However, this image did not have enough room to cut with scissors without losing some of either the frame or the inside.

So I used a sharp craft knife and slowly but surely cut around the frame inside. I did this in the same way that you use a craft knife to cut thru thick material- using several shallow cuts going all the way around, and then repeating the process until I had cut all the way thru the thickness of the rubber.



For most instances of frames, I try to trim the mounting material as close to the insides of the frame and image that was cut from it, so that I can assemble the entire image back together on the mounting block and stamp the whole image as it was originally designed.

Now, in the example of the Grunge Mirror, here are some things I have the flexibility to do with the two pieces separated:

- Stamp the outside frame in a dark color or emboss it. Then the inside image can be stamped in a lighter color to get that grungy background inside the frame. This allows anything stamped on top of that background to show up.
- Stamp the frame on paper using any ink. It can even be embossed. Then stamp the inside image on acetate using Stayzon ink. The stamped acetate can be used as a separate layer glued under the frame and then the entire piece can be layered over another image to give the illusion of a frame with old, dirty glass. This also works to make the frame into a shaker box. The shaker box example will be written up in my blog in the near future.
- Stamp the frame or the inside on its own.

There are other frames in my sets that originally come with words inside them.

Note: this actually helps the stamp work better so that you don't get that pesky ink inside the frame if it was to be empty.

Depending on how close the word is to the frame, use scissors or a craft knife to cut the word out from the inside of the frame. Now you can mount and use the word separately from the frame or still use them both together. Some examples are shown below:



The above stamps were separated from the words *Aspire* and *Memories*. The Circle Frames can now be used on their own or together with the original words.

Note: The inside foam of the Circle frames should be trimmed a bit closer to be assembled all in one piece with the original words. I went back in and trimmed those with a craft knife.



Once the Oval Name Tag Frame from my *Frame Makings* set was separated from the work "*Friend*", there are many other words that can now be used inside that frame.

Words

Phrases are great images to separate, because you can then use them separately or even together but in a different direction than originally designed. For example, my "*You and I*" phrase from my *Circle Frames* set can be mounted separately.



You can combine the word “I” and “You” with the word “Adore” from the same set to get “I Adore You”. Or if you wish to stamp “You & I” vertically rather than the original horizontal design you have that option.



Backgrounds

My Bubble Wrap backgrounds come in 3 different sizes in the Grunge Mirror and Bubble Wrap set. They are great for stamping backgrounds. However sometimes you don't have enough space to stamp the entire image to fill an empty area without stamping over what you have already stamped. Rather than having to mask off the stamped area, you can cut one “bubble” from the Bubble Wrap image to use as a filler stamp.



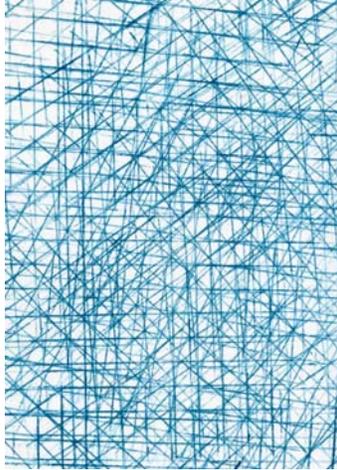
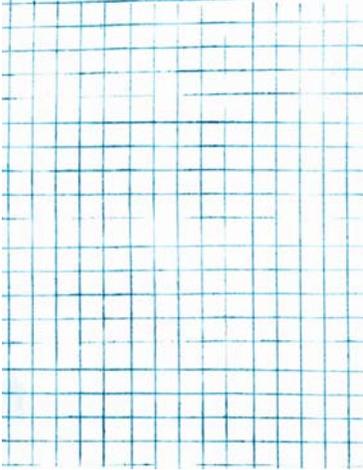
Now you have a single Bubble stamp that can be used to fill in any white space that might be left in your background.

Lines

My Memo Pad stamp from my Knit Border and Memo Pad set can be separated into two parts- the Spiral Border and the Lines.



This way you can stamp the lines multiple times to make the “Memo Pad” as long as you wish. You can also use the lines separately to stamp grids and cross hatch textural backgrounds.



I hope you have enjoyed my Creative Cutting instructions! Check out my [Blog](#) to see examples of these stamps in use.