



Trashmagination Podcast #7 Making Valentines and Business Cards from Maps

Welcome to Trashmagination, a podcast about reimagining trash. I'm Carla Brown.

Do you have a drawer full of maps somewhere in your home? When I moved to the United States from Canada almost 20 years ago, I gathered a lot of maps. I was not well-acquainted with the geography. My husband and I thought we were only going to live here a short time so we took a lot of trips up and down the east coast.

We have maps that you unfold, and we have triple AAA maps like flip books.

Nowadays the only time I need a printed map is when we go hiking to a place where we could use cell reception.

There is something about maps that makes me hesitant to put them in paper recycling. Somehow they are sentimental. Maybe they represent a vacation. Or maybe it is the texture of the paper which is thicker than other types of paper. Or maybe it is the color palette – have you noticed how the colors of inks changed from decade to decade?

But have I have used maps in two creative reuse projects which I'll share today. The first project is making Valentines from maps. This might be a good idea for your family if you need to whip up some Valentines.

Each year my kids make Valentines for their class. Surprisingly, most did not involve creative reuse of trash - mostly paper, paint and stickers. Two years ago, my daughter Nora made Valentines that involved recycling maps. We cut out heart shapes from the maps and from colorful paper. We also cut squares from recycled handmade paper. Rather than gluing, we laid them down in my sewing machine and sewed from the top to the bottom of the Valentine – one straight line. That held everything together. We used a normal sewing needle.

At first we were going to write the words "Show me the way to your heart." But Nora was worried because it seemed a little mushy for a class valentine. So after a while she came up with a MUCH better idea which was "Follow Your Heart." This was just the best Valentines message ever! Here was a message about the heart that was so much more meaningful than most Valentines messages. I was blown away when she said that idea at only age 11.

Here's another project that recycled maps. In 2014, Trashmagination lead some creative reuse activities for kids at my local Maker Faire. I wanted to have business cards for Trashmagination. I didn't want to have typical business cards because it seemed like it would not be consistent with my message of creative reuse, even if the cards were on recycled paper. So somehow I came up with the idea of making business cards from recycled maps.

To make my business cards, I printed my Trashmagination logo and URL on address labels. I cut out rectangles from old maps that were about ½ inch larger on each side than the labels. These cards get a big reaction from people. They say "Oh wow! What a great idea! I have a bunch of old maps!" I would think that if you were a real estate agent, or a landscaper, or you worked for in government – a business card made from maps shows you care about where you live.

I collected map project ideas on a Pinterest board which I'll share in the show notes. My favorite projects were:

- a bridal bouquet of origami flowers folded from maps of places important to the bride and groom
- a locked showing a place that really matters to that person
- a woven basket
- hand-rolled beads

Any paper craft can be made with maps including envelopes, bunting, wedding invitations, wreaths, cards, decoupage on jewelry or furniture, scrapbooking puzzles, drawer liners, paper gift bags and wrapping paper. I saw one person figured out how to get maps to show up on your finger nails.

Maps can be combined with license plates to make a great geography-themed gift. I'm thinking about how at graduation time, people often given that Dr. Seuss book "Oh the Places You Will Go!" and I would think a map-themed gift would work great with that.

Until next time – May you see your trash as just another source of art – and Valentines! - in your life.

<http://trashmagination.com/valentines-from-recycled-maps-follow-your-heart/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/Trashmagination/maps/>

<http://www.housingaforest.com/sewn-valentines/> - source of sewn valentine idea