

# HOME MADE

## Golden age of crafting

It's possible there has never been a better time to be the crafty type. The creativity and competition behind blogs and do-it-yourself publishers have produced a glut of elevated, thoughtful, sophisticated projects for modern homemakers, gift givers, parents and kids.

— Chantal Lamers; home@sfgate.com



Nicole Hill Gerulat

Merrilee Liddiard, author of children's craft book "Playful: Fun Projects to Make With and for Kids," says little ones will have hours of play with this do-it-yourself wood set.



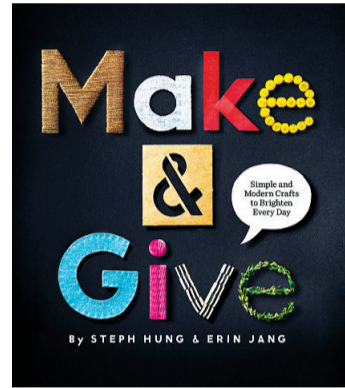
**Pretty Packages: 45 Creative Gift-Wrapping Projects:** When it comes to wrapping, South Korean blogger and designer Sally J. Shim admits she's a sucker for pretty packaging and believes it's an extension of the gift itself. In her new book, "Pretty Packages: 45 Creative Gift-Wrapping Projects" (\$19.95, Chronicle Books), Shim guides readers through the basics, beginning with proper wrapping techniques. She also details how to create custom paper gift bags and oodles of ribbon-tying options, each one paired with detailed photographs and step-by-step instructions. Shim's projects are bright and modern yet rooted in simplicity, which makes them easy to appreciate and re-create. No gift-giving wrap is overlooked, from washi tape glassine party favor bags to stitched felted gift card pouches as well as packaging ideas for gifting baked goodies. More must-makes: her beautiful hand-painted furoshiki (a reusable traditional Japanese cloth wrapper), yarn pom-pom toppers and irresistible brownie-mix jar kits.



**The Paper Playhouse: Awesome Art Projects for Kids Using Paper, Boxes and Books:** The pretty pattern inside security envelopes, big cardboard boxes and even beat-down file folders will be met with new eyes after flipping through "The Paper Playhouse: Awesome Art Projects for Kids Using Paper, Boxes and Books" (Quarry Books, \$22.99). Oakland author and mother to two boys, Katrina Rodabaugh demonstrates the ease of fashioning playful art, decor and interactive toys with scissors, glue, paint and perhaps the box of cereal the kiddos polished off that morning. "Once you turn your attention to the beautiful paper scraps available to you, you will quickly build a hefty stash," she writes. Projects work for parties, playrooms and everyday makery, such as simple paper garlands or festive paper crowns decorated with washi tape or triangle block prints. Her budget creations also include a Volkswagen Bus box, a cottage playhouse and pretty much the cutest cardboard dollhouse imaginable, complete with a pitched, fringed roof, modern "wallpaper," faux bois paper floors and a mini garland to pull it all together.



**Materially Crafted: A DIY Primer for the Design Obsessed:** For many do-it-yourself decorators, a handmade touch is more than necessity, it's a cherished hallmark of their lifestyle. That seemingly effortless artistry is celebrated in "Materially Crafted: A DIY Primer for the Design Obsessed" (Stewart, Tabori and Chang, \$24.95). Victoria Hugins, author of the blog A Subtle Revelry, introduces a medium in each chapter, techniques for working successfully with the materials, and then pairs them with several projects. Must-makes include concrete planters and a sleek pedestal cake stand, origami paper box lights, lollipop-like wax dripper cake toppers, and garden globes fashioned from perforated metal hanger straps.



**Make and Give: Simple and Modern Crafts to Brighten Every Day:** "A token of affection means the most when it is handmade and heartfelt," write Steph Hung and Erin Jang, the authors of "Make and Give: Simple and Modern Crafts to Brighten Every Day" (Roost Books, \$21.95). "It's the small things that pack the most punch: a secret note, a sweet treat or a little gift to brighten the day." It's a sentiment carried throughout the pages of this incredible little book, thoughtfully crafted and penned by a pair of Martha Stewart Living alums. Handmade gift giving will come easy with this companion as your guide, from fun fill-in-the-blank tattoos, to a series of easy-to-embroider nickname handkerchiefs and even farmers' market gift kits. The "experience" gifts are simple yet totally memorable, like how-tos on decorating a co-worker's desk or creating a progressive date that calls for little more than envelopes, cardstock and imagination.



**Playful: Fun Projects to Make With and for Kids:** Merrilee Liddiard has created the most beautiful, magical world to spark the imaginations of both children and their parents in "Playful: Fun Projects to Make With and for Kids" (Abrams Books, \$24.95). The mother of three writes the popular children's blog Mermag.com, and somehow she also found the time to dream up this anthology filled with more than 25 artful, modern and sophisticated projects. Children will be captivated by intricate floral paper crowns, knight smocks and (cardboard) swords, lovely soft trapeze dolls, decor-worthy illustrated animal art pillows and the coolest cracker box and duct-tape trucks that any kid would be proud to load up and mash across the house.

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**SFBotanicalGarden.org**

Image: *Ceanothus* sp., courtesy of Dee Jay

