

Stamps & Dies

A match made in heaven • by Melanie King

Fussy-cutting stamped images is an intricate art form that produces lovely results. But if your fingers are less than nimble or you're pressed for time, there's an easier way to get cut-out images that pop.

A host of stamp companies offer coordinating sets of stamps and dies to make the process of cutting out stamped images quick and painless. Simply stamp an image on paper and cut it out using the set's coordinating die and your favorite die-cutting machine. You'll love the clean, crisp cut lines, and since you're spending less time snipping, you'll have even more time for stamping!

Combining the elements of stamping and die-cutting together on a card helps create layers and dimension for a design that pops. Try these tips for combining stamps and die cuts:

- Look for basic shaped dies like circles or squares you can use for any kind of card, no matter the season or theme. These shapes can be used to cut out small, stamped images that don't already come with coordinating dies. You'll reach for these shapes often and can find them in many different styles.
- If you're looking to eliminate the typical border and embossing left behind with many cutting dies that coordinate with stamps, try the Stampendous line of cutting dies.

"I love using the combination of dies and stamps together! Rarely do I complete a card that doesn't include both elements."

—Jen Carter

The cutting edge is on the inside line of the die, allowing for careful alignment and exact cut. What you see through the die is what you'll get.

- Look for stamp and die sets that include little extras like bonus words or shapes you can use with the stamped images. Newton's Nook Designs offers several such sets with extra die-cut images that create a perfect place to add in sentiments that coordinate with the stamped images.

- Check out some online lessons on combining dies and stamps. Local King Rubber Stamp offers 50 plus video tutorials to help educate customers on using stamps and matching dies.

- Look for matching dies that are 2-in-1: die cutting and also embossing. With the die's guiding window, you can easily line up the images and get a perfect cut.

HOORAY! SUPER!

Frantic Stamper design team member Jen Carter created this super card using the Superhero line of coordinating stamps and dies. She incorporated multiple colors of vibrant American Crafts Zing! embossing powders. She stamped with Imagine Crafts/Tsukineko VersaMark ink for embossing and used her favorite VersaFine Onyx Black for the sentiment.

"I love using embossing powders because there is such a wide variety of colors and textures on the market and they often add pops of color to a card with minimal work (and minimal skill)," shares Carter.

Frantic Stamper is an online paper crafting store that carries a



HOORAY! SUPER! / Jen Carter for Frantic Stamper

(Stamp credits: Superheroes & Super Sayings—Frantic Stamper.)

wide variety of products. In business since 1996, Frantic Stamper recently created a line of unique dies and clear stamp sets.

“I love using the combination of dies and stamps together! Rarely do I complete a card that doesn’t include both elements,” shares Carter.

For this card, she stamped the superhero images on cardstock, then die-cut with the Frantic Stamper Superhero Outlines & Pow Zap Bam dies. She attached the superhero with foam tape for even more dimension.

“Less is more. I don’t think every space on a card needs to be filled,” advises Carter. “I try to keep my cards simple so I don’t distract the recipient from the intended purpose of the card.”

Carter recommends adding a simple sequin or enamel dot when you feel like your design needs something more. This usually satisfies without making the card busier, she says, allowing the stamped and die-cut images to stand out.

You can see more of her art on her blog at www.jensinkspot.blogspot.com. She’s also a member of the Li’l Inker Designs design team and a contributor to the Cupcake Inspirations Challenge Blog.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

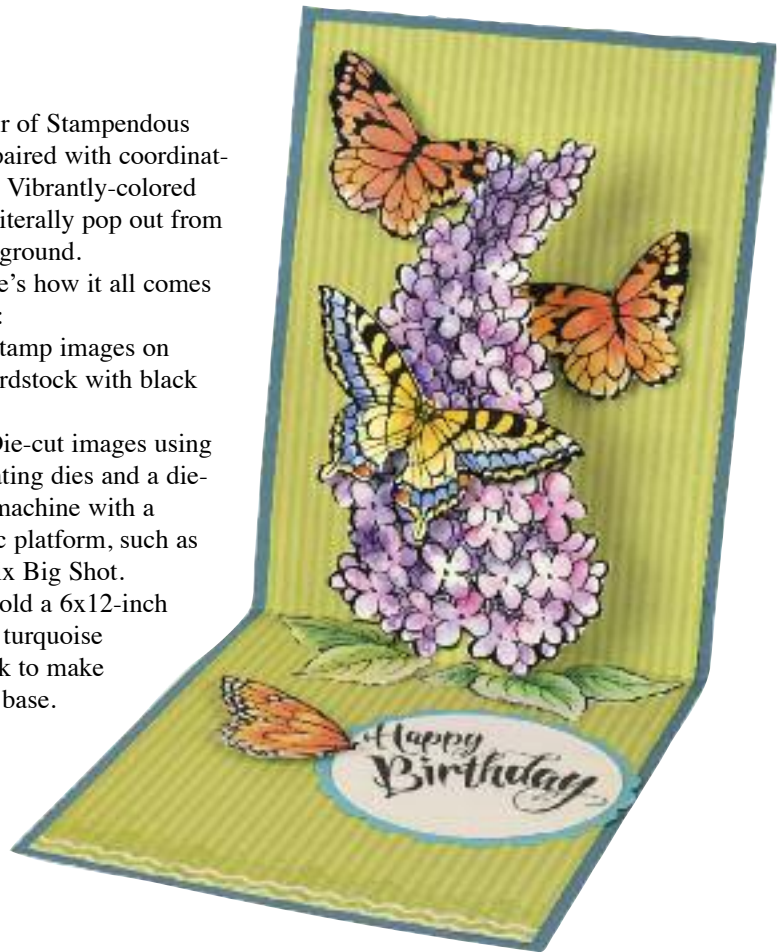
In addition to simplifying the process of cutting out stamped images, stamp and die sets can be used to create interactive and three-dimensional cards with serious wow factor.

The Happy Birthday card, created by Fran Seiford of Stampendous, uses

a number of Stampendous stamps paired with coordinating dies. Vibrantly-colored images literally pop out from the background.

Here’s how it all comes together:

1. Stamp images on white cardstock with black ink.
2. Die-cut images using coordinating dies and a die-cutting machine with a magnetic platform, such as the Sizzix Big Shot.
3. Fold a 6x12-inch panel of turquoise cardstock to make the card base.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY / Fran Seiford for Stampendous

(Stamp credits: Cling Lilac, Pinned Birthday—Stampendous.)

4. On a 5.75x11.75-inch panel of background paper, determine the center by folding to match the edges and gently pinching at the sides.

5. Align the pop-up die with the center of the panel and run it through the die-cutting machine.

6. Turn the panel over and push at the score lines to gently train the folds in the way they should go. (See the Stampendous website for a link to a YouTube video showing how this

is done.)

7. Fold up the top hang tabs and fold back down at their score line.

8. Secure the panel into the card base by first gluing the bottom half in place. Close the inner panel and make sure it folds flat and pops up correctly. Apply adhesive to the back side of the top where it will not conflict with the tabs or base platform. Fold the card closed to secure.

9. When dry, adhere the flowers and butterflies to the pop-up panels. The lilac bunch can adhere to the base platform and the tab above the platform for extra support.

10. Stamp and die-cut a greeting. Layer additional elements using adhesive foam squares.

The butterflies and lilac were

A Die-Cutting Machine & More

The ScanNCut machine from Brother allows you to turn stamp images into dies with its ability to cut around a closed-line image. Cut directly from paper or fabric, scan an image to cut it, select quilting or cutting patterns, adjust pattern layouts and more. Check out the videos, project ideas and tips on the website: www.brother-usa.com/ScanNCut/Videos.aspx.



ONE LIKE YOU / Nupur Priya for Heartfelt Creations
 (Stamp credits: Blazing Poppy Petals, Poppy Corner and Border, Blazing Poppy Fillers, Delightful Daisies, Classic Message — Heartfelt Creations.)

stamped with Imagine Crafts/Tsukineko Memento Tuxedo Black ink, colored with Staedtler Karat Aquarelle colored pencils and blended with a water brush for a softer look.

Seiford is the owner, founder and chief artistic officer of Stampendous, manufacturer of many stamp products including wood mounted rubber stamps, clear stamps, stickers, glitter, embossing powder and more.

Since developing the coordinating stamp and die sets, Stampendous has also added some multi-purpose die sets to its repertoire, including pop-up dies and die sets for layered circles and scalloped circles, and Fitted Frames A&B which provide a perfectly concentric pair of layers for every Stampendous stamp size.

You can see more of Seiford's artwork on Stampendous product packaging and in catalogs, as well as in her book *Embossing Powder Techniques from A to Z*.

ONE LIKE YOU

"I love sharing my love for art and craft, and Heartfelt Creations has given me a huge platform for connecting with like minded people and sharing my passion," says Nupur Priya, Heartfelt Creations design team member.

She created this intricate, yet relatively simple-to-assemble card using the Blazing Poppy, Decorative Lace Border and Delightful Daisy dies, as well as the Deluxe Flower Shaping Kit from Heartfelt Creations.

Here's how she stamped and assembled this lovely layered and dimensional card:

1. Ink the edges of a 6-inch square white card base. Stamp the tree image randomly. Die-cut a strip of white cardstock with the lace border die. Adhere it to the card base.

2. Stamp the Poppy Corner image twice onto a 4.25x5-inch panel of watercolor cardstock.

3. Color in the images with Distress ink using a Koi water brush. Add pollen to the flowers with a fine-tip black pen.

4. Mark the center of the panel with a pencil and position the Spellbinders Labels Four die to cut out a hole.

5. Stamp the sentiment on white cardstock; ink the edges and adhere the sentiment behind the



SIDE-BY-SIDE / Lisa Yang for Local King Rubber Stamp
 (Stamp credits: Chicks, Timberline background, Words background — Local King Rubber Stamps.)

stamped panel using adhesive foam tape. Mat the panel with black cardstock; adhere it to the card.

6. Stamp petals and leaves onto white cardstock, then die-cut the images. Ink the leaves and the poppy petals. Shape the petals and leaves with the Deluxe Flower Shaping Kit.

7. Adhere two petals together and glue a pearl and some seed beads inside the flower center. Adhere the poppies and leaves to the card.

“Most of my inspiration comes from the stamps and dies,” says Priya about her creative process. “I pull out a few dies that I think will go with what I have in mind, arrange them in different ways, make some rough sketches and then once I get to something I like, I start making it.”

To see more of Priya’s impressive designs, check out her blog <http://nupurcreatives.blogspot.in/>

DREAMS COME TRUE

Dreams Come True by Jennifer Jackson of Newton’s Nook Designs is inspired by the snuggly kitten dreaming away on a soft blanket. The dreamy image called for a soft and cozy color palette to accentuate the quiet and sweet feeling of this card.

“I often just look at the images I’m creating with and try to design a card that conveys the way the images make me feel,” shares Jackson.



DREAMS COME TRUE / Jennifer Jackson
for Newton’s Nook Designs
(Stamp credits: *Newton’s Naptime*—
Newton’s Nook Designs.)

Stamp and Die Resources

As you’re searching for coordinating stamp and die sets, keep these companies in mind. While this is not a comprehensive list of stamp and die manufacturers, you’ll find a wide variety of styles and options herein.

Stamp & Die Sets:

- Art Impressions, www.artimpressions.com, (800) 393-2014
- CC Designs Rubber Stamps & Dies, www.ccdesignsrubberstamps.com
- Character Constructions, www.characterconstructions.com, (770) 605-3450 Mon-Thurs 10 am to 5 pm EST
- Frantic Stamper, www.franticstamper.com, (541) 826-2500
- Heartfelt Creations, www.heartfeltcreations.us, (888) 773-3088
- Hot Off The Press/Paper Wishes, www.paperwishes.com or www.hotp.com, (888) 300-3406
- Impression Obsession, www.iostamps.com, (877) 259-0905
- Momenta, www.momenta.com, (800) 448-6656
- Newton’s Nook Designs, www.newtonsnookdesigns.com
- Paper Smooches, www.papersmoochesstamps.com, (623) 594-1894
- Spellbinders, www.spellbinderspaperarts.com, (888) 547-0400
- Stampendous, www.stampendous.com, (800) 869-0474
- Stamplistic, www.stamplistic.com, offers a weekly Matching Die & Stamp Discount Club, (440) 989-2622
- Whimsy Stamps, www.whimsystamps.com, offers a helpful technique video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=jcONiyzqVaU

Jackson stamped the image of the cat onto watercolor paper with Ranger Archival Jet Black waterproof ink. She colored with Inktense watercolor pencils and a water brush. Using the coordinating Newton’s Naptime die set, she die-cut the image. She cut a 4x5.25-inch panel from light blue cardstock and die-cut the thought bubble from the upper left-hand section. After adhering the panel to the card, she stamped the sentiment inside the bubble.

When coloring with the Inktense watercolor pencils and water brush, Jackson colors lightly with the pencil along the edges of the image, then uses the water brush to pull the pigment softly into the lighter areas. For darker areas, she uses more pencil pigment and less water.

As co-owner of Newton’s Nook Designs alongside her husband, Jackson creates unique and whimsical stamp designs and dies, many of which are based on her orange tabby cat Newton. She illustrates all of the stamp sets,

starting with hand-drawn sketches, then digitizes them. Newton's Nook Designs specializes in cute animal images that are fun to color, but the company also produces a nice variety of bold stamp designs that you can quickly ink up with colored inks.

Will Make Dies to Match Stamps:

Dies Direct, www.diesdirect.com, (800) 899-3366
Impression Obsession, www.iostamps.com, (877) 259-0905
Western Engraving, www.amlaserengraving.com, (715) 373-5377

SIDE-BY-SIDE

“Rubber stamping is all about the design. Without the professional design, the rubber stamp is just a piece rubber, worth nothing; it is the design that makes the rubber stamp come alive,” says Lisa Yang, owner of Local King Rubber Stamp.

An artist and a stamper, Yang says she thinks like a stamper when she's designing images. She values educating customers and offers over 50 online tutorials on the Local King website, www.localkingrubberstamp.com.

Local King matching dies are two-in-one, meaning they die cut as well as emboss. The cutting line is very close to the images, and the guiding window allows you to easily line up the image and get a perfect cut.

Yang stamped the images and colored them with markers. “The detail in the design is the key that makes coloring

with markers fun and easy,” she says.

Yang began her stamping journey in 2006, and like most stampers, was so addicted to all the stamps, ink, patterned paper and tools, she was spending a great deal of money. One day her husband asked her, “Why are you using other people's artwork? You went to art school, didn't you?” and Local King Rubber Stamp was born.

“I love to see when a customer stamps for the first time and the smile it puts on their face—that just melts my heart and makes me feel good that my artwork makes people happy,” shares Yang.

A regular contributor to RSM, Melanie King lives in Herriman, Utah.