Capture the Holiday Spirit Ornaments

Designed by Steven James

You can capture the holiday spirit—forever—when you encase cards and memories under glass. Create keepsake ornaments for the tree, handcrafted and unique gift tags, or use the technique to adorn yourself with simple soldered holiday-themed pendants.

Inspiration:

A few years back, I received a catalog in the mail and was fascinated by its cover art. While my starving artist budget didn't accommodate my starry-eyed dreams of buying the items inside, I was able to encase sections of the cover art in glass to create a festive set of holiday ornaments.

Tips:

- Choose a soldering iron based on your own preference, experience, and budget. A soldering iron with an internal regulator prevents the iron and ultimately the tip from exceeding a predetermined temperature. Less expensive irons will burn out easily or require the use of a rhetostat, a tool that regulates the temperature of the iron. Invest in the best iron you can afford or share the expense with a friend.
- Learning to solder like a professional takes practice and patience. Don't become frustrated with the process. To ensure that you learn the technique, use scrap glass and foil to practice.
- Always use lead-free solder for any item that is worn, handled frequently, or comes in contact with food. Solder sold as 50/50 or 60/40 contains a combination of materials such as lead and tin and is better suited for traditional stained glass projects.
- A dirty soldering tip will prevent the heat from melting the solder, causing it to clump and ultimately ruin your project. Therefore, always clean the tip after each pass and keep the silver color of the tip consistent throughout the process by regularly cleaning it with the Sal Ammoniac Block and a moist sponge. Never use abrasives to clean the soldering tip.

Safety Tips:

- When the solder is applied to a surface covered in flux, it can spit at you. Always wear safety equipment and long sleeves and pants, and work on a heat-resistant or protected surface, such as ceramic tile.
- Never leave the iron plugged in or unattended for extended periods of time and always place it in its holder when not in use. While not always necessary, a soldering iron station is a wise investment; it will keep the iron, which can reach temperatures of 800°, in a safe location and out of your way while you work. Once the iron is cool, store it in a sealed plastic container to prevent rust and corrosion on the tool.
- Sal Ammoniac fumes can be harmful, so be sure to work in a well-ventilated area and avoid breathing the fumes.

Materials:

- 100W Soldering iron with temperature-controlled tips
- Soldering station with moist sponge (optional)
- Fireproof work surface
- **2** Glass slides
- Lead-free solder
- Selected paper design*
- ¼" Copper foil with adhesive backing
- Glass flux
- Application brush
- Sal Ammoniac Block
- Jump rings or decorative hook wires
- Colorful ribbons and small beads and crystals

Additional Supplies:

- Brass brush, burnishing tool, emery board, glass cleaner, glue stick, pliers, protective mask, ruler, safety goggles, scissors, small vise, soft clamp, soft cloth, soft scrub brush or an old toothbrush, solder cleaner**, towel, tweezers

**Decorative background papers can be printed at www.macaroniandglitter.com*
***As an alternative, use a combination of salt and vinegar.*

For product information, see Sources of Supply on p. 112.

Time to complete project:
an evening per project or a weekend for all
Dimensions:
Varies depending on the size of the slide glass used
Beginner/Intermediate project