

BY ALYSSA J. OON

**V**ALentine's Day, like any celebration of old, has a history that is as complicated as some relationships. While some say it is the commemoration of the death of St Valentine (who was a martyr that secretly married Christian couples and helped them escape during the reign of Emperor Claudius II), others believe it was the church that popularised Valentine's Day as a way to downplay "Lupercalia", a fertility festival (which was dedicated to the Roman god of agriculture Faunus and the Roman founders Romulus and Remus). On the other hand, there are some who simply believe that Feb 14 is a day marking the start of bird mating season (no pun intended)!

Though St Valentine's Day is not widely celebrated in Malaysia (especially these days), we still see stores primmed and preened in pinks and reds to commemorate the "Day of Romance". No doubt we should love and appreciate our loved ones every day of the year but we do not. So, take this day as a cue to shower those close to your heart with an extra dose of love - be it your spouse, children, parents, family or friends.

And what better way to fan the flames of romance than to dress interiors accordingly and ignite that loving feeling.

**DOSE OF LOVEY-DOVEY**

Still not over Christmas yet? Luckily, because Valentine's wreaths are an actual thing! Make your own wreath in the traditional circular shape or the more romantic heart shape. Use fake flowers, felt flowers, paper flowers or pom-poms in colours of red, pink and white.

Flamingo Toes blogger Beverly McCullough made a vintage-style Valentine's Day wreath using a foam wreath, then covering it in white, pastel pink and blue yarn. Afterwards, she added a garland of felt hearts, a felt bow and yarn pom-poms, finishing it off with a pair of lovebirds sitting on a tiny branch. Just looking at it makes hearts go aflutter!

**AFFECTION BLOOMS**

In keeping to the theme of "Christmas in Valentine's Day", swap the bouquets of flowers and go rustic with a long vase of twigs with little ornaments hanging from them.

Imitate the blooming of flowers in spring by attaching paper hearts along the branches in varying sizes and colours. For an added rustic



Think **red, pink** and dress up on **love**

> DIY projects to add a hint of St Valentine's love to interiors

touch, use a water pitcher as a vase. The branches can also be wrapped in yarn to add a feel of warmth and cosiness to it.

For a more modern take, paint the branches white and substitute the red and pink flowers for black, white, silver and gold hearts instead. If you still want to keep with tradition and stick to the usual colours, sprinkle half of the paper hearts with gold glitter, such as *The House That Lars Built* founder Brittany Watson Jepsen did in her "Valentine's Day Branch Tree" tutorial. Jepsen used scrapbook papers of pink, red, white and glitter to make 3D hearts. Little clip-on birds were added for extra colour and personality.

Alternatively, make simple paper roses out of circles of paper and stick them onto the branches. Others have made hearts out of felt and hung them on the tree.

**LOVE IS IN THE AIR**

Garlands seem to be a favourite decor piece on Valentine's Day! In other countries, garlands are commonly hung across the fireplace under the mantel. In Malaysia, we can adapt and string them just about anywhere - cupboards, walls, staircases or shelves.

Instead of stringing together the usual plain paper hearts, look for heart-shaped doilies, make felt hearts, crochet some yarn hearts or make pom-pom balls and put those unused playing cards to work or even conversation hearts made out of paper.

Clean Scentsible founder Jenn Lifford reworked a burlap



heart banner she found at a discount store retailer. Taking it apart, she then took French script ribbons and made a ruffled line before sewing the burlap pieces and heart shapes onto the line. The rustic piece fitted in perfectly against the backdrop of her modern-styled kitchen cabinet. In the piano room, she made paper banners out of colourful scrapbook paper and stuck on family photographs. Garlands and banners make great festive decor pieces. They can also be wrapped up and kept easily until the next round of celebrations.

**WALLS OF ROMANCE**

There are so many ways to decorate walls for Valentine's Day! *Classic in Gray* founder Jessica Hirsche made a neutral-toned heart no-weave-wall hanging using just rods and yarns as material. The wall hanging basically comprises three rods holding varying lengths of white and grey yarn placed on top of each other in descending lengths. This DIY is great for those with Scandinavian-styled homes.

However, if you are keen on keeping with the trend of geometric shapes, then try Jeran McConnel of *Oleander and Palm's* tutorial for a giant geometric wall heart. The wall art piece uses just sheets of scrapbook paper in two shades of

pink and gold. Cut the sheets into triangles, arrange them into a heart shape and then stick it on! (This can also be done on a smaller scale for a framed piece.)

Another geometric heart DIY project is by Jess of *Make and Do crew*. Using lots of popsicle sticks, Jess stacks the popsicle sticks on top of each another to create a wall piece of three intertwined hearts. A template is provided on the blog for better guidance with the shape.

**CUDDLY-HUGGY PILLOWS**

If you are looking for more functional pieces (or a cuddle partner), then dress your pillows up for the occasion. Find a simple magenta-coloured pillow case and stencil on common Valentine's Day phrases such as "XOXO" or "LOVE", etc. To add more personality to the room, turn a plain white pillowcase into a colourful one with polka dots or hearts.

For a more muted tone, try cross-stitching a heart onto a grey pillow case. Sew-on felt pieces also seem to be a popular choice. You can channel a more modern luxury style using black and white pillow covers with gold scallop trimmings. Sarah



*Hearts* founder Sarah Khandjian used gold pleather (imitation leather made from polyurethane) to give her pillows a more luxurious touch. On a white cover, she used gold pleather cut into scalloped trimming while on a black with white polka dot cover, she cut a big heart out of the pleather and sewed it on.

With St Valentine's Day just around the corner, we hope these suggestions will help you add hints of romance to interiors to inspire love. Spark love within your homes and make your Valentine's Day a lot more colourful and fun by focusing on the amusing and enjoyable aspects of these DIY decorations ... better still, done together with your loved ones.

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