

*He who builds to every  
man's advice will have a  
crooked house.*

*Danish proverb*

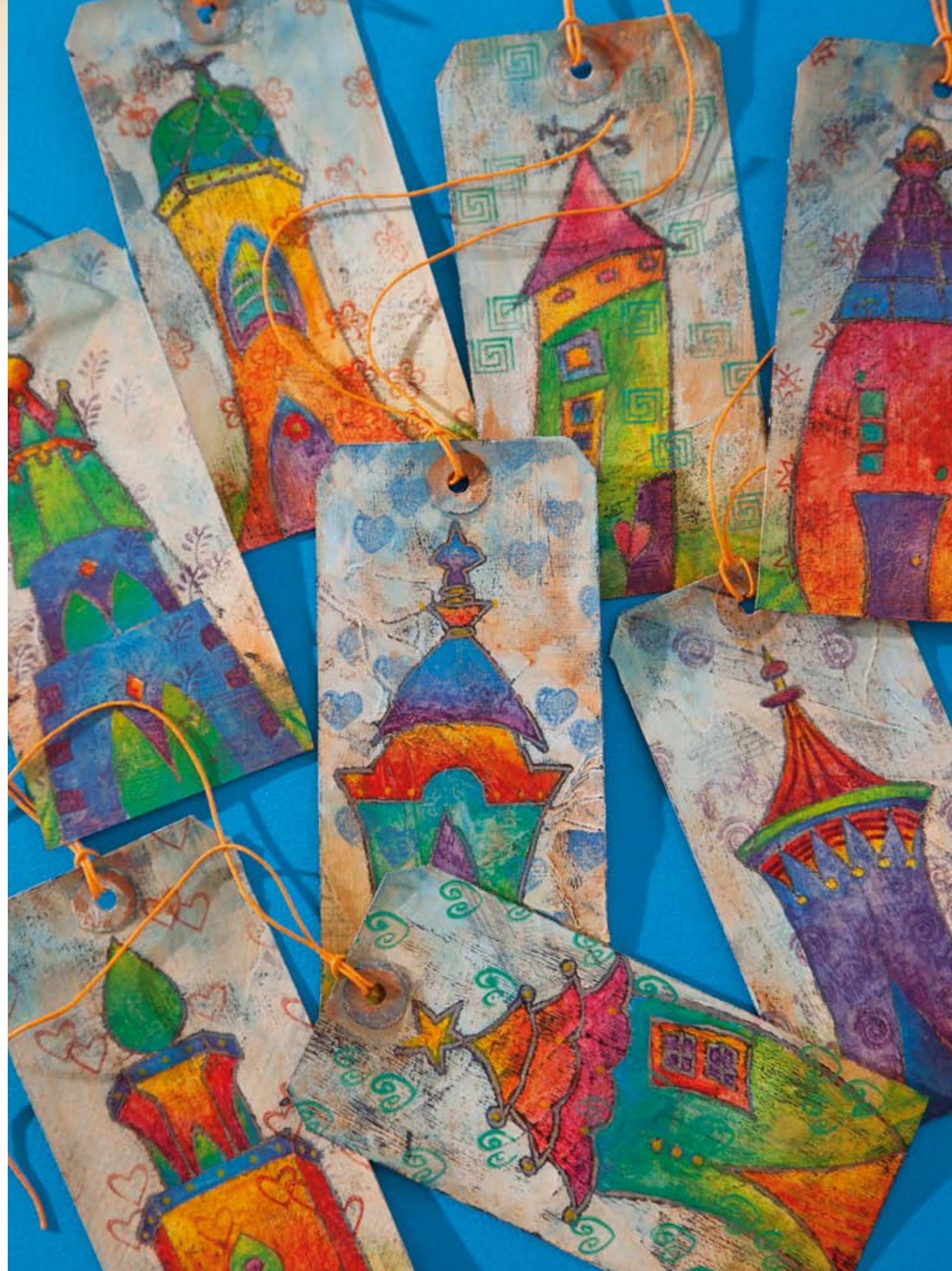
# Play housey housey with me

Introducing negative mono-printing, enhanced with vibrant acrylic inks and textural stamping.

Somewhere inside all of us is a little fantasy. Armed with many photographs upon returning from an overseas trip, I was struck by how many buildings I'd captured. When I examined them closely I realised I'd focused on particular architectural details and that the turrets looked just like fairy houses – so here we are, with my interpretation. Painted on tags, my avenue of quirky houses is coloured in bright acrylic inks. This was a golden opportunity to practise colour mixing as I only used the primaries. The tracing process is a little different too, adding texture of its own.

## You will need

- Manila tags or other support
- Papers to glue on: I used newspaper, a map, a list, a piece of dress pattern, graph paper, house plans and sheet music – none of which will be that apparent once you've finished, but all add to the effect.
- Glue
- Gesso
- Burnt sienna and black acrylic paint
- Acrylic retarder
- Good quality tracing paper
- Brayer
- Pencil
- Acrylic ink – just the primaries will do: yellow, magenta and cyan
- Watercolour brushes
- Small stamps (optional)
- Ribbon or string to finish off (optional)





1. My Manila tags came in sets of four, so I left them that way to begin with, though it doesn't really matter. Glue various bits of paper to the tags, allowing some to encroach onto the next tag.
2. Paint lightly with gesso or white paint, allowing the various textures of print to show through.
3. Paint with a thin wash of burnt sienna – the paint should appear quite patchy: darker at the top and the bottom. When dry, separate the tags – you may need to cut them if the paper has been glued across two.
4. Trace all the houses onto separate pieces of tracing paper.
5. Mix a little acrylic retarder with the black acrylic paint. This extends the working time of the paint. Work on one house at a time: brayer a thin layer of the black acrylic mix onto the back of the tracing paper. Turn this onto a tag and retrace along the lines creating a 'negative tracing' effect. You will be left with an impression of the house and the background will be a little marked with the paint, adding an aged effect.
6. Keep the negative tracings – they can be used in another project. Use milky pens and chalks to colour them.
7. Have fun mixing as many colours as you can from the three primary inks. (Magenta and yellow make orange; magenta and blue make purple. Mix blue and yellow for green.) Paint the houses, blending a variety of shades and tones for effect.
8. To create a sky effect, thin down a little blue ink and paint in a patchy way at the top of each tag, blending to nothing as you come down the tag. A small hake brush is very useful for this. Paint green more definitely at the bottom for the land.
9. Taking your cue from the most dominant colour on the house, stamp small motifs on the house and the background to create a quirky texture.

