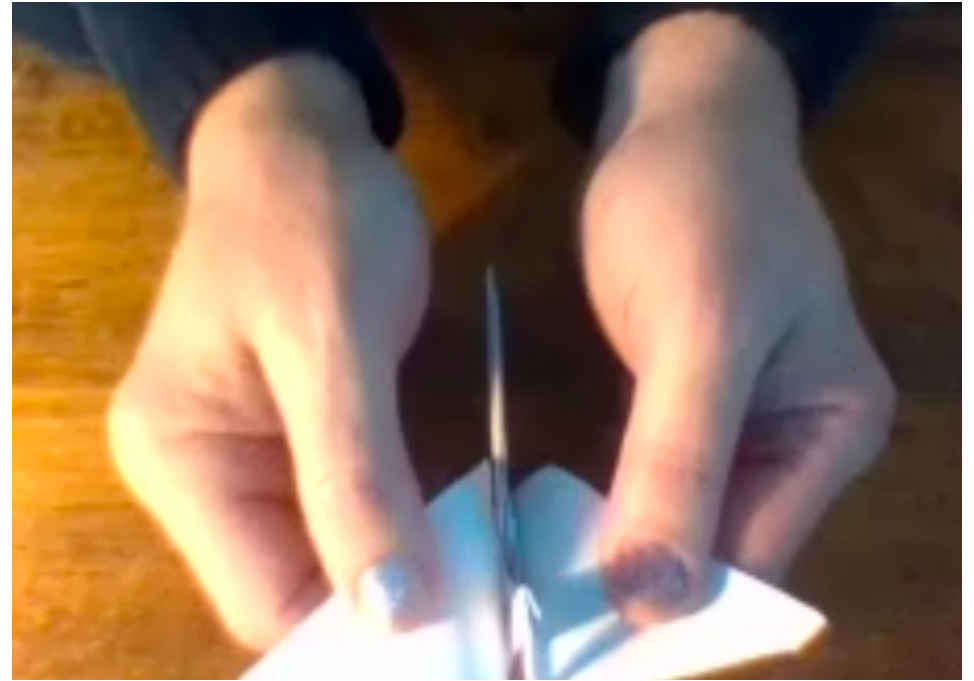

FOLDING PAPER CRANES

Miller + Shellabarger

Practice patience and embracing imperfection by folding paper cranes together.

Ages 7+
We encourage adults and kids to create together

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO



Dutes Miller folds paper cranes on Zoom with participants in the Celebrating Care workshop. Dec 15, 2020.

We all have the power to care for one another and our community. Paper cranes are simple objects that can help us show our care for others. This activity isn't about making perfect paper cranes. It's about using the time and attention required to make a paper crane to think about caring for other people. Making paper cranes creates space to focus on attention to detail, listening, and intention which are important to understanding care.

Caring for one another takes time. We can all use more time to practice slowing down and being together with attention and intention. Intention is the purpose or goal we are trying to achieve, the change we are trying to make, through our actions. For example, you probably wouldn't knit a scarf so that there is one more scarf in the world, but you might knit a scarf with the intention of helping your mother stay warm in the winter. When we do something with intention, we can also say we do it with care.

Married, Chicago-based artists Stan Shellabarger and Dutes Miller make work about taking time and doing small things with care together. Since 2003, they have regularly performed their artwork *Untitled (Crochet)* in which both artists sit together in a public place and crochet onto either end of a giant pink tube. They will keep crocheting this pink tube together in public until one of them dies. Then the surviving artist will unravel the tube, also in public. The intention of this artwork is not to make a big pink tube. It is to spend time together in public and to help other people think in new ways about what it means to love another person and share your life with them.

The Long Dream exhibition includes another work by Miller + Shellabarger, a Butter Book. This is a book made out of the collected and cleaned wrappers of all the sticks of butter the couple used in a year. Each book is an unusual record, like a journal or a calendar, of a year spent together.



Performance view, Stan Shellabarger & Dutes Miller: *Untitled (Pink Tube)*, MCA Chicago, Oct 15–Nov 19, 2013. Photo: Nathan Keay, © MCA Chicago



Miller & Shellabarger, *Butter Book*, 2018. Artist book: butter wrappers (various brands), butter boxes (various brands), linen cord, linen tape, book board, rice paper, satin ribbon, and a bone clasp. Five parts, each: 5 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 1 in. Courtesy of the artists and Western Exhibitions, Chicago

1. GATHER YOUR MATERIALS

Several sheets of square paper, any size works
A tool with a hard edge, like a pen or spoon
Something to write or draw with

2. SET YOUR INTENTION

An intention is the goal or purpose of your action. The intention of this activity is to show care for another person. How do you show care for someone you care about? What do you hope that person will feel? What wish would you like to send them? Write or draw your wish on your paper.

3. FOLD YOUR CRANE

Find illustrated step-by-step instructions at
www.savingcranes.org/education/origami-cranes/

You can also follow along with Dutes' video on the MCA website.

While you fold,

Repeat your intention. As you focus on the good wishes you have for someone, those feelings will become part of your paper crane. When you give that crane to another person, you'll spread those good wishes to them.

Be patient with yourself and don't worry if your crane isn't perfect. Folding paper cranes involves a lot of steps. Can you use the power of your care for your loved-one to get through your frustration? Do you ever do things you're not very good at just to spend time with someone you care about?

4. SHARE YOUR CRANE

By folding a paper crane with intention, you've created a symbol of connection and care. You can use this crane to spread care to your loved ones or even to strangers. Give your paper crane to someone you care about or leave your crane where someone will find it as a surprise.

TALK WHILE YOU MAKE

How do you know what someone else needs?

Have you ever seen someone and realized they were sad? How did you know? Maybe they were sitting all alone or maybe they told you a story about why they were sad. Imagine you had the same feelings they had. What might help them feel better? Talk about what makes you feel better when you are sad.

Do you remember something that used to be really hard for you to do? Maybe it was playing a new game or learning to tie your shoe. How did it make you feel when it was hard? Did you want to stop? Did you get angry? Was there anyone who helped you practice? How do you feel now when you do it? How could you help someone else who is trying to learn something new or challenging?