

# Lunar New Year Foods Workshop with Meegan Lim Transcript

[Meegan Speaking]

## **Agenda**

- And that brings us to this year in our hybrid approach for tonight's online presentation. Just wanted to share a quick agenda and what we'll be covering. So we're gonna start off with a quick overview of how to set up your workspace and keep a clean area so you can create beautiful work. Then we're gonna go into the details of each approach. So we're gonna go into the beginner level with the Lunar New Year Feast Collage and Yue Moon Paper Food, which is the advanced level. After that we're going to take a five-minute break. I encourage everyone to set up their workspace as well as just grab a snack or a drink, whatever you need to do in that time. We'll then come back for the demo and I'll show you some of the steps of each approach. And then we're gonna jump back onto the presentation to talk about documentation and how to submit your artwork and get it to the lanterns in the exhibit. And lastly, one of my favorite parts, is the show and tell. Hopefully, we have some time for that tonight to see some of your work and of course we'll have a Q and A session at the end.

## **Workstation Set-Up**

All right, so one important thing to know before jumping into art making is just how to set up your workspace, especially since we are doing a lot of paper cutting tonight. There will be a lot of tiny pieces of paper floating around if you don't have a place to put them. So to remedy this, I recommend using a small container you have on hand that can keep all your scraps in place and in terms of gluing, it can get a little sticky on your surface if you don't keep it clean. So I recommend you to have a scrap piece of paper to designate as your gluing area and it keeps it nice and neat. And lastly, to make sure you don't lose any of your paper cut shapes and design and if you plan on working on this at a later date, having an envelope or another container on hand will help you not lose anything in the future.

## **Lunar New Year Feast Collage - Beginner Level - Intro**

All right, so we're going to get started with the Lunar New Year Feast Collage approach. This is the beginner level for those who are not comfortable with drawing or painting as well as those who just want to create something really fast. I also really enjoy this approach because it's very soothing to color all of the foods. So, I wanted to share some photos of commonly eaten foods during lunar new year as it's the primary inspiration for this workshop. These are images of foods specifically in Chinese households and ones that I saw growing up, but these do differ depending on the culture that celebrates lunar new year and also different for every household. So, you will find these foods illustrated in your provided templates, all illustrated in black and white and hopefully this provides you some ideas of the coloring that you could approach tonight but you're also encouraged to get a little creative with it. So, from start to finish we have different

foods. So we're starting with a tray of togetherness, and it has a bunch of sweets in it. I remember seeing this on the dinner table as almost like a centerpiece and they look different to every household. Usually some candied vegetables or fruits. So we have some lotus root, some apricots, sometimes coconut sticks and watermelon seeds in the center, and you also will find some candies. My favorite is the white rabbit candy. I know that Paddy is also a big fan of them as well. And then next to it we have a steamed fish and this often symbolizes prosperity and if you do a little bit more research into these foods that we're discussing today you notice that some of the meanings and significance kind of ties back to the actual sounds of the words and how they connect with words such as surplus or wealth or luck. Next to it is steamed chicken. It's also considered like Hainanese chicken rice in other parts of Asia. This is probably my mom's signature dish. And then next to it we have a new year's cake and this new year's cake often symbolizes a higher income or hope in a higher position in the new year. It's very delicious. It's like this glutinous rice dish with brown sugar and you pan fry it. On the bottom row on the left we have some dumplings symbolizing wealth. We also have some longevity noodles next to it resembling happiness and longevity, which is in the name. Next we also have turnip cake, which resembles or symbolizes luck or good fortune, and lastly we have some bok choy with braised shiitake mushrooms, and mushrooms specifically in this dish represent nutrition and healing powers in medicinal uses.

And I just wanted to note, whether or not you celebrate this holiday, I invite you all to reflect on the ways food can create memories and bring us together. It's different for everyone, so hopefully you can reflect on that. Feel free to share your favorite memories with food in the chat.

All right, so for this approach, the materials you'll need include the printed templates that are provided, specifically the ones with the foods. And then we'll have the actual lantern panel template. This is the ratio or size that is needed for the lantern panels to fit. And with the actual art making supplies, we will need some scissors, a glue stick, or tape if that's what you have, and then coloring materials. So, whatever you have on hand. So you can have gel pens, colored pencils, markers, and crayons.

So, for this approach I recommend you color in your templates before you cut. It just makes it a very smooth process and more manageable and while any scissors can work I recommend a smaller pair. This is just more ideal for maneuvering around the template and the cutout lines. And if you'd like, and you want to spruce up your panel even more, you can also use Washi tape if you have some on hand.

So, as I mentioned, it's really important to have a very colorful and bold background. It's super important for these to be seen from below and some festive color choices to keep in mind are red, yellow, and green. These are colors that you often find in food and they're kind of key colors to make foods look appetizing but of course, use whatever you'd like. And try to create a background that complements your food. It can be a contrasting color so the food can stand out, it can be a little bit darker, or it can be a pattern that mimics some of the motifs in your food. So, in terms of actual coloring techniques, colored pencils offer the ability to create a softer look and easy blending. A crayon can be a little messy but it can create a fun, textured look, and a

wide-tipped marker is very effective, both in vibrancy and time. I just recommend not to go over the same area too many times as the ink tends to rip up the paper. And lastly, I've included collage and cardstock as options. Having these materials make it very easy to create a colorful background without having to do the coloring yourself.

So here are some demos. I have some examples that my grandfather actually helped me color in. So it was a fun collaboration. So, once you finish coloring your templates then you cut them out and you can start arranging them on the paper and you start gluing them down. You can also add some additional patterning and designs around to emphasize them. You can see here that there's some examples of the templates where it's focusing more on the ingredients as well as one where I, this is kind of the main inspiration of this approach, where I drew these images from last year and I cut them out. So if you want to replicate a specific dish that is familiar to your family, feel free to draw your own and then cut out the circle of the dish for the square and then glue it onto your background.

And then here are two vertical demos. We have one where I collaborated with my grandfather again. I had fun arranging those in this fun pattern as well as the one on the side, kind of more of a traditional, kind of tabletop view showing the red pockets on the table as well as some of the cutlery and that's pretty much it for this approach.

### **Yue Moon Paper Food - Advanced Level - Intro**

I'm going to jump into Yue Moon Paper Food, which is the advanced level, and this is one for those who are comfortable with exploring a combination of drawing and painting techniques as well as paper cut. So, the materials for this approach are quite similar to the last. The main difference is that you'll be using cardstock or construction paper to create your food from scratch. The rest includes your scissors, your glue stick, and your drawing materials. So, we'll be carrying over some of the same techniques from approach number one into this one. And the printed template is optional. It's just helpful to have on hand so you can refer to the dimensions of the panel. Also just a rough sizing for cardstock to use for your background is about nine by five inches.

So, I have some alternatives for cardstock because it can be quite expensive and not everyone has access to it. So, here are some options in case you don't have any on hand. You can, of course, use construction paper. It does an excellent job, especially in the color department and it's super easy to cut. Magazine scraps or any collage materials are really great and you introduce some very fun textures into your artwork. You can also color or paint your own paper with pencil, crayons, watercolor, or marker. This is an extra step but it can be worth it because you can create really amazing textures and create your own custom colors.

So, tonight I'll be sharing four main foods that you can create with basic shapes. Specifically, in the demo portion tonight you'll see some mandarin oranges, some lotus root, persimmons, and bok choy as you see here on the slide. And while I'll share details during the demo, I wanted to note that you can use the second page of the beginner level feast collage as inspiration and

references. You can also use our friend Google if you decide to reference something different. And my main advice with this approach is not to focus on the detail in the beginning. Try to break down the food you are creating into very basic shapes. So here, I broke down the bok choy into three heart shapes and two teardrops. Doing this first just makes it a lot simpler to assemble and create your bok choy and then you're free to create smaller details with marker and pencil, any of your drawing materials. So, these shapes do not have to be perfect whatsoever.

Opting for an organic look works really well since it is food and food's not perfectly roundly shaped. Some key shapes for our approach tonight include some circles and ovals, teardrops and almond shapes, these are really great for leaves, thin and narrow rectangles for stems or any kind of garnish or confetti sorry, confetti you wanna create your artwork with. And then some organic shapes like leaves and waves and oblong heart shapes.

So, here are some examples. You'll see the bok choy that you saw in the previous slide but come to life with the paper cut. We also have the lotus roots, the mandarin, and then on the top-right corner we have an approach using the collage materials and the magazine scraps. This one I got a little bit more detailed with the shiitake mushroom and the chili pepper and the star anise. This one was really fun to create. And then for this slide we have some vertical demos here. In the center we have persimmon fruits. I decided to add some abstract shapes and lines to just make it a little bit more fun and incorporate some stylistic approaches. And then on the left and right-hand side we have some approaches where I used watercolor and a larger scale. You actually will see them behind me on my wall and this is a very fun approach if you want to kind of expand your techniques and play around with painting techniques. It's really fun to create these larger shapes and you can get a little bit more detailed because of that. Okay, and then we have a little bonus template here. So before we head to break, I wanted to share these bonus approaches in case you want to create a custom design.

[Oh, I see Florence has their hand raised up. Florence? If you have a question, feel free to send it in the chat and I'll try to get to it during the break. I'm just gonna wrap up this one slide.]

There are two storefront templates that you can use to re-create your favorite local business in your Chinatown. Here, I drew my grandfather's favorite place, which is King's Noodle. I just remember him taking me here very often as a kid and he still talks about it to this day. So I kind of re-created the barbecue meats hanging in the window and some of the chefs and I encourage y'all to play around with the coloring techniques discussed today to re-create those memories. Implementing some texture and some bolder colors to contrast elements really help. You can also use the blank panel templates that are included in your packages to create whatever you'd like in relation to your celebration. Of course, you're not limited to the approaches today. Feel free to do something freestyle. And just to note with the actual borders that you've been seeing along the artworks that this border will be placed around all artworks and just to be mindful of those corners. We don't want anything important in those corners 'cause they will potentially be cut off.

All right, so I'm going to get started on the demos. Hopefully everyone's coming back. Feel free to ask any questions before we start. If anything, we'll check out your questions later in the evening and yeah. I'm going to stop my camera on my laptop here just so we can focus and also in case anyone's tuning in through their mobile, you don't need to switch between views.

### **Lunar New Year Feast Collage - Beginner Level - Demo**

Okay, so hopefully everyone can see my tabletop view okay. So, we're gonna start with the beginner approach, which is the Lunar New Year Feast Collage, and you're going to start off with your lantern panel template here. Hopefully everyone was able to print this off. You also need your food templates. Here are some that are already pre-colored. This is the one where it focuses more on the dishes. It has some cutlery and utensils as well as the red pockets. Here are some that I already started cutting but this is a sheet that focuses more on the individual ingredients and this side would have some candies that are also often eaten. And just for a closer look, these are the demos that I showed earlier in the slide. So here's one with the actual foods. Here I used some cardstock. It just makes it a lot easier for coloring. And here's one where I colored the background first with pencil crayon, I added some floral designs to complement some of these random foods floating around in space. And just a reminder, if you are considering using cardstock for your background, the rough size is nine by five inches if you wanna cut that to size.

All right, so I'm gonna get some of my supplies out. All right, so as mentioned, have your container of scraps on the side so you can keep things clean. And before we jump into coloring, I did wanna mention those scissors again. So smaller pairs are very helpful. And here's one that actually has a pointed tip that's a little bit tapered, and this is really helpful for cutting smaller details if you're able to get a pair. All right, so I'm going to start some coloring on this sheet here. I'm gonna do some pencil crayon techniques. They're very simple, but the main thing here to keep note of is just how much pressure you're applying to your paper. So I'm just gonna show this on this plate because it's a large surface area that you'll be able to see the transition of color. So I have this red color right here and I'm gonna start pressing quite hard on the paper like around the edges here, and you can see how visible that color is. I'm gonna bring it up so you can get a closer look. And then once you start releasing some of that pressure you're putting on, you'll be able to create some fun gradient effects. This will look most dramatic when you're using a darker color. If you're using a color like yellow you might not see the effects as prominent as this color here. And I have this colored. You'll continue this over here. And the fun thing about pencil crayons is that you can layer. So maybe I want some warm orange tones in this plate so I'm just gonna layer that on top here. A fun color that works really well with this palette is yellow, so maybe I can put that on the side. But just think about the foods that you're coloring and what you think works really well with what you see. There we go. So we have an example of that pencil crayon being blended with some more pressure. It does take a little bit more time in comparison to something like marker. Marker is just more efficient and vibrant. So I can show that with these red envelopes right here. So I have this red marker, it's a little bit more of a fine-tipped one, but I prefer going into one direction. So I just gotta do this diagonal. It just helps you avoid going over the same spot and ripping, as I mentioned earlier. Okay, and then

I'm just gonna color that Chinese character in yellow really quickly. With markers too, when you're blending certain colors, like yellow for example in this blank spot right here I'm gonna show you, you can layer different tones. So maybe add some blue. This is something you can do with your background. You can see that there. You also see in this example right here. So, we have some of these layers being added up. If you have wider-tipped markers you're able to create larger swatches or strips and then with finer tips you can add some details or patterning. And with crayon, as I mentioned, you can create some fun textures with this. It can get a little bit messy when the wax shreds off but it does a great job with the color payoff. I'm just gonna color this spoon here. There we go. And that's just the basic coloring techniques. And also a quick note about these plates, you're welcome to actually draw some of the foods on here. Here's my like really quick attempt at drawing some bok choy on the side of this plate, but you can of course render it a little bit more in depth compared to what I did just now. Maybe I'll just color that in with some green.

Okay, so once you have everything colored on your sheet or just the pieces that you do want to use in your design, then we can start cutting. So, I'm gonna put this aside. I wanted to focus on the individual ingredients tonight. So I'm gonna start cutting some of this out, and my main tip with paper cutting is cutting things into smaller pieces. It just makes it a little bit easier, especially when the template is just so close together. You don't wanna like by accident cut something in half. So I'm gonna cut this lotus right out, doesn't need to be perfect, and then we can focus on this. So I'm just gonna slowly cut around the dotted lines. You can go a little bit closer if you'd like. And there we are. We got a little lotus root. I'm gonna throw that in there. For the sake of time, I'm gonna take out some of my pre-colored ones as if we were in like a cooking show. So I got some examples over here. All right, so. There's lotus root, so maybe we'll focus on that. We got some oranges here. Cool, I think I'm gonna use some of these. This will be a fun design with these warm colors. Now I'm gonna take over this kind of pre-drawn background. I'm maybe gonna add a little bit more to it but I'm going to maybe, I know. I'm gonna add some fun lines. This would be more of an abstract food design. Your background doesn't also have to be like super finalized before you glue things down. Things can be added a little bit later. Okay, I think I'm happy with that. And I'm gonna start putting my pre-cut and pre-colored fruits and vegetables on this sheet and just start arranging things how I like them. This is just super helpful before you glue something down in case you think you might wanna switch things up, this is a bit more safe. Now once you're somewhat happy with the placement of your design, then you're to get whatever adhesive material you have on hand. So I have some glue stick. The smaller glue stick works really well for this since we have smaller designs. I'm gonna take my spare sheet of paper and I'll take my piece here and just glue it and then just rub it down so it sticks. And then you just keep repeating until you like it. And, as I mentioned, you can color again or add more detail. So here maybe I wanna emphasize this persimmon fruit along with the background. So I'm gonna add some like a circle around it maybe, add some fun shapes and lines, have some movement in it but that's essentially this approach and as mentioned, you can freestyle, add your own dishes if you'd like, create a tabletop view, make it more like a pattern, whatever you like. So I'm gonna move this aside so we can jump into the advanced level, which is the Yue Moon Paper Food. Ima or Edan, how are we doing on time?

- [Ima] You're a little over.

- [Meegan] Okay.

- [Ima] So a few minutes to make up.

### **Yue Moon Paper Food - Advanced Level - Demo**

- All right, cool, thanks. All right, so I pulled this example from our Yue Moon Paper Food. This is the persimmon design that we saw earlier and yeah, this one is approached more like a pattern and then we have the mandarin oranges, which is my personal favorite. It's just super fun to cut out these leaves and they're very satisfying to make. So I'm gonna quickly go over each of the vegetables that are demoed here since we're a little bit tight on time. But please let me know if there's something that you're stuck on a little bit later. So, we're going to start with the bok choy. This is the one that we went over in the slide. So I'm not gonna get into a lot of detail. But as mentioned before, we have the two kind of teardrops and some heart shapes or these like abstract organic leaf shapes and then you kind of put it all together and you get these fun bok choy. So you can then later add some details with your drawing materials.

So I'm gonna do a quick demo. I got this kind of cream, white paper and then we got some green. You can also use different tones of green, like shown on here, to get different variations. You can also use your painted paper. So here's an example of that. You can get really nice patterns. All right, so big recommendation when you're cutting paper cut like this and having these specific shapes is to cut them into smaller pieces, similar to what I showed earlier. I'm gonna cut it into these kind of inch and a half strips and then we're going to cut this into the teardrop shape. With this kind of style, you want to more approach your paper cutting by rotating the paper you're holding instead of your scissors. It just makes it a little bit easier. So I have my one curved line. I'm gonna turn it around and do the same thing. And we have our little teardrop. I rounded the edge and made it a little bit imperfect intentionally so we can make it more like a realistic bok choy. So I'm gonna create one more. I'll do a smaller one here. Okay, so we got our two stems and we're gonna go into the leaves with this green. Again, I'm gonna cut it into a smaller piece. And with this one, same kinda thing, you're gonna sort of curve but then you're gonna turn it fully around for it to go in like that. Let me do it again. So this is more of like a heart. You can also add another hump and it makes it more like a leaf, and there we go. I have some more examples here. They don't have to be perfect, again, and it makes it a more believable bok choy in the end. With this, you have the option of gluing it onto your panel directly or gluing it together first as a whole vegetable, if you will and then gluing it onto your panel. I'm gonna do the latter. So we got our stems and I'm gonna glue my leaves behind that. So I'm gonna add a little bit of glue at the bottom of these leaves like so. And you're just playing around with the placement. There we go. So we have our little bok choy. So I'm gonna place it on my panel for now.

We're gonna jump into the lotus root. This one is very fun to do as well. It's quite simplistic, just a lot of different parts. So you're gonna start with a circle and these kind of oblong teardrops, I

don't know, bean shapes if you will. So I have this kind of tan paper and this brown to show the actual holes of the lotus roots. And when you're cutting something that's round like a circle for this, cutting it into a square first helps you create a guideline for yourself. So we have our little piece of paper and you're just gonna rotate it and I'm just gonna keep doing it in comparison to your teardrops. You just keep going. Here we go. We got our little circle. For the actual holes of the lotus root, I like to cut it into even smaller pieces and you really just kind of make weird-looking ovals and cut them off at strange places, especially when the lotus root is just so organic looking, it works really well. So, there's an example of that. Some examples of this. So some are a little bit longer than others, some are a little bit shorter. You can also cut a smaller little circle to go in the center. you have one right there. I'm just gonna quickly glue this. And then you kinda just continue around the circle and these ones are really fun, especially because they almost are like snowflakes and each one is very unique. I'm gonna place that over there, move this aside.

Now we're gonna jump into the mandarin oranges. This one is kind of a mishmash of all of the ones that we went over already. So we're gonna start with the round circle. You can also make it more like an oval shape. This also makes it more realistic. I'm gonna go for that in this case. You can also add a little divot at the top. So, that can be like a spot where you put your stem. There we go. We've got our mandarin orange. Now we're gonna do the leaf. So, very similar to the teardrop one, I'm gonna cut it into a strip and I'm gonna turn the paper. There we go. There we go, we got our leaf and you could keep it really simple and just have like the leaf and the mandarin. That looks really cute at times. You can also cut just a small rectangle strip like this as your stem, and that's just a very simple way of creating your mandarin orange. You can also create different variations of your stem to add more leaves at the top as you can see them in the grocery store sometimes, mandarins sold with the stem. There ya go, we've got our orange. And I'm just gonna quickly show you how to cut the mandarin segment shape. So I have this smaller piece of paper and you're gonna cut a half-moon shape like this. So kind of round it off and it's almost like a bean shape. You're gonna round off the corners here. Just got this round oval and in the center you're gonna make this half-moon divot shape. And you got your little mandarin segments.

All right, lastly we're gonna move on to persimmons and persimmons can look a little bit different, depending on the type. So some have this like nice teardrop shape, some are a little bit more round like an orange, and the fun thing about the persimmons is they're a very iconic kind of leaf stem shape. This is a little bit tricky at times. I sometimes have a hard time making them super symmetrical but again, it's a fruit so it doesn't need to be perfect. Let me show an example that's a bit larger. I'm gonna start off quickly with a circle one. And then with the leaf, I prefer to actually just draw it out and sketch it and you're kind of creating this round leaf shape and almost draw like a regular leaf if you'd like and just kind of repeat that in four opposite sites. And it's fine if you have your pencil 'cause since it's cardstock, you can flip it over and it'll look okay. And you're just gonna cut along the guidelines. There we go. You can add like some designs later on to add to your leaf. Something cute like that, and then you just glue directly in the center here. And we have our full roster of fruits and vegetables in paper cut form. And then once you have your set and you're happy with them, then you can start arranging it like we did

with the previous approach and then we glue it on and then you got your beautiful artwork. And you can of course also choose a dish or something and go a little bit more elaborate. I'm really excited to see what y'all come up with.

## **Documentation**

Okay, great. So now that you have your artwork completed it's important to know how to document it so it can be featured in one of the lanterns and also you're welcome to create more than one panel of artwork. We're highly encouraging that. So, when you're documenting it, use whatever camera you have access to. So your phone, a digital camera, or even your tablet camera. And the main thing to consider with this step is just how to light your space. So either natural lighting or a well-lit area in your home that has white light, just so there's not any discoloration with your artwork. And just yeah, try to make sure that it's overcast and a cloud day if you are documenting it outside. It just makes it a lot easier. And also when you're documenting in your home, it might help to prop your work up on a wall with some tape and take it that way. It just helps you avoid any shadows that might appear when you're taking it over a table.

And the last thing here is not to worry about cropping the photo. It's actually really helpful for us on the art team to have that extra space so we can edit the border around it and have some extra paper to work with. All right, so once you have your work documented, you're going to visit this link right here. It's also in the workshop packet and Ima will follow up in an email to reiterate that, and it will also pop into the chat towards the end tonight and once you visit this link we ask you to name your file with this naming convention. It's very simple. You're gonna start with your first name then you're gonna do an underscore last name or you could also just put whatever name you want to present in the online exhibit and then underscore YueMoon3. And if you're submitting more than one, just add the number to that. So if you have three artworks, add a one, two, three at the end.

And then most importantly, please submit your artwork by next Tuesday. It is our preferred date for this to get in just so we can have some time to print it out and make sure it gets into your lanterns. But we are actually extending the absolute latest deadline to December 30th, especially since the workshop tonight is a little bit later in the schedule. If you need some extra time, that's okay. And yeah, we are super looking forward to seeing your work exhibited in the new year. If you're able to, we hope to see you at the celebration installation site at the Dragon City Condo entrance. We're still finalizing some details so we'll follow up with more details once they're done.