Things to Make and Do

*Raucous Invention: the Joy of Making*, Mark Hearld (Thames & Hudson)

Mark Hearld's house makes mine look tidy. I may have books on the floor and paintings leant against the walls, but Hearld has bits and bobs and trinkets, shells and cards, and corn dollies, figurines, ceramics, old toys and *things* on every level surface. Or that's what it looks like in the photos in this new, revised and enlarged edition of his book.

I first came across Hearld's work, or at least clocked his name, when York Art Gallery reopened after a refurbishment a few years ago. He had been commissioned to curate 'The Lumber Room', and he duly filled it with a cornucopia of material from various museums, galleries and their store rooms in York, accompanied by wallpaper, sculpture, images, scrapbooks and models he had produced.

These, like his home collection all feed into the illustrative collages which appear to be the root of much of his work. Offcuts, textures and silhouettes – often animals or birds – are arranged and layered up to produce exquisite images. Owls in flight against deep blue, waders on a beach with a modernist building behind, swallows swooping, dogs dancing, hares leaping, intertwining flowers and plants. Think 1930s prints from the likes of Eric Ravilious meeting Eric Carle's *The Hungry Caterpillar* and a visit from John Piper's 1930s experimental collages on the beach phase. Think big bold colours, impressionistic landscape backgrounds and fluid ink drawing.

They are beautiful pictures in themselves but these images can be applied elsewhere, using Hearld's own but also others' skills. Wallpapers can be printed as can fabrics for shirts or scarves; there are editions of letterpress cards too. Collages can be turned into free-standing three-dimensional card sculptures or become steel weathervanes, and Hearld is adept at adapting his designs for ceramic tiles, plates and platters.

You name it and Hearld has probably done it or had his work reproduced in or on it. The market is flooded with affordable postcards and fold-out birds. (We have two hanging in our lounge.) Hearld is an exuberant collector and maker whose scrapbooks and shelves cannot contain his interests and influences. This glorious hardback book is almost as unruly, a treasure trove of colour, movement, ideas and images. Handwritten lists of influences and works jostle with loads of full-page photos and illustrations along with brief informative texts. Section by section, we are drawn into Hearld's joyful kaleidoscope of creation and invention. Take a deep breath and dive in.

Rupert Loydell

(420 words)