Shadow Lantern Project from **Paper Illuminated**, by Helen Hiebert, www.helenhiebertstudio.com

Paper Selection: the stencil paper for this project should be a card-weight stock which can be cut with a craft knife. The shadow cast through the stenciled paper will be cast onto the screen paper, which should be semi-translucent (so that the shadow cast from the light of a candle inside will be visible).

Materials:

small piece of card stock to make pattern

stencil paper: four pieces of 4-1/2" x 6" card stock

screen papers: four pieces of 5-1/2" x 7" semi-translucent paper

hinge strips (for the lantern): 4 strips of 6" x 1/2" cut out of matching screen paper or another strong thin paper

hinge strips (for the screen): 3 strips of 6" x 3/4" cut out of matching screen paper or another strong thin paper

8 pieces of 1/4" square strips of balsa wood cut to 6" in length

8 pieces of 1/4" square strips of balsa wood cut to 4" in length

small saw (for cutting balsa) Japanese saws or jeweler's saws work well

carbon paper or photocopy machine

pencil

craft knife

cutting mat

glue

Coming Up with a Stencil Design

       To start this project, you will need to design a pattern. Textile designs, tile patterns and architectural details are great sources of inspiration. There are many copyright-free clip art books full of interesting designs and patterns. Of course you can work freehand and just draw your own design. Once you choose a design, trace it or use a photocopy machine to enlarge, reduce or repeat patterns to create a 3-1/2 x 5-1/2" image area (your pattern should have at least a solid 1/4" border all around). The cut-outs should be at least 1/4" in width to be visible when illuminated.

Making a Pattern

       Your lantern can have the same design on all four sides, or you can create four different patterns. If you use the same design on all four sides, it is useful to create a pattern. Make the pattern 4-1/2" x 6" -- the same size that your finished panels will be.

1. Using carbon paper, trace the design onto a piece of card stock (You can photocopy the design directly onto the card stock, if you prefer). Use a craft knife to cut out the pattern.

2. Trace the pattern/s onto the four card stock panels. Working on a cutting mat and using a straight edge and an craft knife, cut out the design. Depending on the thickness of the card stock, you might be able to layer two or more pieces of card stock and cut them at the same time.

Creating the Panels

Start with one stencil panel (card stock with cut-outs), one screen paper, two four-inch and two six-inch lengths of balsa wood.
Note: Most balsa wood these days has the printing or paint on the ends for retail sales purposes. These features might show in your final product, so I recommend either cutting them off before you start, or using sand paper to remove them.

3. Apply glue to one side of a strip of balsa wood and attach it to one side of the stencil.   (if there are pencil marks on your stencil, glue the balsa wood to that side -- the marks will not be visible on the final lantern).
4. Glue the other three strips of balsa wood to the outer edges of the stencil. {5C-4} Repeat to make the other three panels. I don't apply any glue to the corner joints of the wood on lanterns this small.

Attaching the Screen Paper

5. Use the template as a guide to cut out four screen papers.   Be sure to cut the small slits at each corner.
6. Set a piece of screen paper face down on your work surface. Place one of the assembled panels with balsa wood stencil-side down and apply glue to the edges of the balsa wood that are facing up.
7. Carefully lift the panel and set it on top of the screen paper, centering the panel on the sheet (the corners should line up with the inside edges of the slits). Flip the entire panel (with the screen paper attached) over and rub your fingers over the glued paper, smoothing any wrinkles.

Gluing Tip: When gluing, always put glue on the object you are gluing. This will eliminate excess glue on the surface onto which you are gluing. Apply glue to the entire surface you are gluing, and if it is a piece of paper, glue "out" onto a piece of scrap paper so that you get glue all the way to the edges of the paper. Keep a damp paper towel nearby, to clean off your fingers, since they may get a little sticky.

8. Turn the panel back over and apply glue to the excess paper on one of the short sides. Fold it up and over the balsa wood, neatly covering the side and top edge of the balsa wood. Fold the two small tabs over onto the adjacent sides of the panel.   Repeat on the opposite short side.
9. Apply glue to one of the long sides and wrap the paper over the side and top edges of the balsa wood, covering the tabs. Repeat on the other side.

10. Repeat steps 5-9 to create the other three panels.

Time-saving variation: If you don't wish to wrap the sides of your panels with paper, you can use an acrylic paint that matches or compliments the screen paper to paint the edges of the balsa wood strips. Paint them before you attach them to the stenciled paper. You only need to paint two opposing sides, since the other two sides will be glued to paper. It is easy to lay several strips together and paint them all at one time. Then, simply cut your screen paper to 4-1/2" x 6" and glue it to the other side of the balsa wood panel. When gluing this version, apply a light weight, such as a book, after gluing the screen paper (which does not wrap around) for a few minutes to allow it to set.

Hinging the Lantern

1. Make a pattern for the hinges and use it to cut four hinges out of the same paper used for the front of the screen or another strong and flexible paper.
2. Score the hinges lengthwise and fold them in half.
3. Lay two lantern panels side by side with the stencil side facing up. Unfold one hinge strip, apply glue to one side, and lay it over the two sections with the fold in the center of the two panels. Hold in place for a moment to set. Fold the two panels along the hinge and check its position, making sure it is in place.
4. Unfold the two panels and set them face down on your work surface.   Place another panel next to the set. Use a straight edge to make sure the bottom edges all line up. Repeat step three above to hinge the third panel to the second, and then the fourth to the third.
5. When gluing the final hinge to complete the lantern, attach half of the hinge strip to one edge of the lantern and stand the lantern up.
6. Carefully apply glue to the unattached edge of the hinge strip (take care not to get glue on any other part of the lantern) and fold the other unattached panel onto the strip, applying pressure to assure that the hinge strip sticks to the final panel.