The Cricut Ecosystem with Kesley Anderson

Chapter 1 - The Cricut Ecosystem

Overview

- Hi, I'm Kesley Anderson. I'm a Cricut teacher and an avid crafter. I find myself using my Cricut almost every day. I make things from cards to t-shirts. We use the Cricut for school projects and any last minute gifts I need to whip up. We'll cover the Cricut machine families, a variety of materials and the heating system. I'll give you a quick preview of the software which is called Cricut Design Space. There's a whole world of Cricut out there. This class will give you a place to start. (upbeat music)

The machines

- Cricut is a three-part system, hardware, software and materials. Let's meet the machines. This little guy here is the Cricut Joy. You have the Explore family and the Maker family. The Cricut Joy is the smallest cutting machine we have to offer. It's about four pounds. The compact size makes it very portable and easy to store. If you live in a small space, you just can close it up and tuck it away and pull it out to craft when you're ready. It works with one single clamp. It holds a fine point blade, or a pen. You can unclamp the holder and switch in your different attachments. Cricut Joy works with smart materials. These are materials that are exactly the width for your Cricut Joy, and work without a mat. Cricut Joy cuts over 50 different materials and it connects with Bluetooth so you can use any of your devices with your Cricut Joy. This is a great little machine to take with you anywhere. This is the Cricut Explore. There are a few different versions of the Explore machines. This one is the Explorer Air. There's also Explorer 3 and older versions of the Explorer Air machine. What makes this one different is that it has the dial on the top of the machine which allows you to set your materials right on the machine. If you're working with a material that's not on the machine, you simply turn the dial to a custom setting and use Design Space to select the material. The Explore has two clamps. You have clamp A, which will hold your pen and your stylus tools and you have clamp B, which will hold your cutting tools. The clamps open and you can easily remove your different tools and replace. The Explore machine cuts over 100 different materials. It is a crafter favorite. In comparison to the Joy, this machine has a wider cutting surface. It's 11 and a half inches. The Explorer is fast, simple, and amazing. This is the Cricut Maker. It is powerful and versatile. The Cricut Maker has two clamps just like the Explore. Clamp A will hold the stylus and your writing tools. Clamp B holds your cutting tools. The Cricut Maker works with 13 different tools. You can easily interchange them. What makes the Maker really exciting is the gear system. The gear allows you to use a variety of different tools including the rotary cutter and you simply slip it into your machine. The Maker cuts over 300 different materials, things like balsa wood and leather. This machine will take your crafting heart away. It's got so much power and so many possibilities. It will grow with your crafting.

Design Space

- How does it all come together? Design Space is the software behind the hardware. This is where you create your designs and communicate with your machine. Design Space works on a multitude of platforms, from a mobile device to your desktop and laptop systems. I use a laptop system, so why don't we start there? Design Space is free. You'll need a Cricut account to access Design Space.

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Once you've set up your Cricut account on your desktop or laptop, it will take you to the home screen. This is always changing. You'll find lots of ideas and inspiration to get you started, or if you know what you wanna create, you just click New Project, and it takes you to the canvas to begin creating. From the canvas, you can select Cricut projects that are in Design Space or images in Design Space. This is called the Cricut Access Digital Library. There are plenty of free images to work with. If you want a little bit more creativity, you can do the subscription version of Cricut Access, which gives you access to over 250,000 Cricut images. Simply do a search for whatever image you're looking for, like birthday, and you'll have lots of options to choose from. If you wanted to create with one of these projects, you simply click on it and add to your canvas. The canvas is where all of the customization happens. Your mobile device will look a little bit different than your desktop or laptop device. On a mobile device, you can start by looking at all categories for projects or images. You can select from here and add something to your canvas. So if you wanted to make this project, you would simply hit Customize, and it would bring it to your canvas. The canvas on your mobile devices are also a little bit different because you don't have as much real estate. So on your mobile devices, all of your features are along the bottom. Because Design Space is a cloud-based software, you can work across all of the different platforms. So maybe you're in carpool and you're working on your mobile device. When you get home, you pick up your desktop or laptop. It works across all three, and your creativity is stored in the cloud.

The materials
- Depending on your machine, you can cut from 50 to over 300 different materials. There are four different mats. Each mat works with a different type of material. The blue mat is the light grip mat, works well with papers and light materials. The standard grip mat is green and works with materials like vinyl and iron-on. The purple mat is the stronger grip mat. It allows you to hold things like leather and thick card stocks. The last mat here is the pink mat and it's the fabric grip mat. This is used for your fabrics and felt materials so with your light grip mat, you'll use this with materials like card stock. This is your standard weight 85 pound card stock up to a hundred pound card stock. You'll use on the light grip mat. Things like velum and very sheer materials will work on your light grip mat. When you're working with card stock, you can also work with the Cricut pens and write directly on the material. The green standard grip mat this is the one you'll use the most. Some of the materials you'll use on the standard grip mat are the vinyls, so let's talk about the different types of vinyls that are available. You have regular vinyl, the premium Cricut vinyl, permanent and removable. With your vinyls, you'll use transfer tape and then there are specialty vinyls like glitter vinyl and shimmer vinyl, even printed vinyls. Your permanent glossy vinyl has a UVA protectant so it's great for outdoor projects and projects that you wanna keep around for a while. The removable vinyl allows you to create your design and apply it and later remove the vinyl without leaving any sticky residue. Depending on your application you'll choose either the permanent vinyl or the removable vinyl, whichever vinyl you'll use, you want to use a transfer tape. The transfer tape helps you remove your design from the backing of the vinyl and apply it directly to your surface. Now if you're working with the shimmer or the glitter vinyl that has a texture on the surface, you'll want to use a different type of transfer tape. The strong grip transfer tape is what you'll want to use on your glitter and shimmer vinyls. On your regular premium vinyls, the standard grip tape will work perfectly. Another common material you'll want to use is iron-on, and again, there's a big variety of choices. The iron on-material from Cricut has been tested to last over 50 washes. You have every day iron-on, and you'll notice your iron-on has two different sides, a dull side and a shiny side. You

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also have fancy iron-on like the glitter and the foil. An additional type of iron-on material is infusible ink transfer sheets. The iron-on, when heated, will adhere to your shirt. Infusible ink transfer sheet actually becomes one with your material. The heat activates the ink and it soaks in directly into your project. Another category of materials you'll use with your Cricut machine are smart materials. Smart materials are designed to work with the Cricut Maker 3, Explore 3 and Cricut Joy without a mat. That's what makes them smart. The Smart Paper sticker card stock works like regular card stock, except it has a sticker backing and you can insert it into your machine without a mat. Smart materials also come in iron-on and vinyl. One unique feature to the smart material since you're not using a mat is the length that you can cut. For example, this iron-on vinyl is nine feet long. It allows you to cut one continuous cut with your machine. Using smart materials helps you craft faster and more efficiently because they work without a mat. If you're using an Explorer or Maker you can still use these materials. You'll just need a mat. Another great machine that uses the smart materials is the Cricut Joy, and they're special. The Cricut Joy smart materials are fun sized for the Cricut Joy. Each one is designed to fit right into your Cricut Joy without using a mat. The Cricut Joy Smart Vinyl comes in a large variety from permanent vinyl all the way up to your iron-on vinyl. It also uses a fun size pen. This pen is designed exclusively to fit in the Cricut Joy and will say Cricut Joy on the pen. Remember, these materials are all interchangeable with different machines. They come in a wide variety of colors and finishes.

The presses
- Sometimes your project requires heat. Cricut has a solution for that in their heat presses. This is my go-to heat press. It has adjustable temperatures and time. The base of the heat press applies consistent heat across the entire design and it has an automatic on-off feature, keeps me safe. You'll need to use an EasyPress mat when working with any of the heat tools. This protects your surface. I also like the mini press. It's very simple to use with only three temperature settings, and it also has an on-off feature as well as the safety base so it can heat up on my work surface. With heat, you can create zipper pouches like this, using glitter iron-on, or just regular everyday iron-on. It just adds a little pizzazz to whatever you're crafting. In addition to iron-on, you can use infusible ink with your presses. The EasyPress flat surface is great for things like tiles, T-shirts, your zipper bag. When working with curved surfaces, like a mug, Cricut has a mug press that works with the infusible ink transfer sheet, your mug, and heat-resistant tape to create great results like this on a curved surface. Speaking of curved surfaces, Cricut also has a hat press to press the curve of a hat with iron-on vinyl or infusible ink transfer sheets. The heat presses come in a variety of sizes, from the mini press to the EasyPresses, all the way up to the Autopress. The Autopress is great for batch crafting. Cricut meets you as a crafter. Whether you're making cards or cutting fabric, Cricut has a solution for you. The Cricut ecosystem, from hardware, software, and materials, is always growing and it's designed to grow with you as a crafter.

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