Art Journaling

A Copyrighted Activity Created by and Re-posted with Permission from Kelley Luckett
http://artjournaling.blogspot.com/p/art-journal-handout.html

With a Forward from Shelley Klammer
http://www.expressiveartworkshops.com/creativity-and-healing-articles/authentic-art-journaling/

and
A link to the Copyrighted Dick Blick Lesson Plan
RX Art Journal
www.Dickblick.com

Objectives:
The participants will:
1. Learn about different forms of art journals they can create and use
2. Demonstrate how to use a variety of lettering in creating journal entries
3. Create art journal pages using the methods learned in the class
Audience:
This activity can be used by any age group and could be especially beneficially when working with a counselor/therapist.

Authentic Art Journaling
By Shelley Klammer

The Pressure to Conform
Because we live in an ego-based world where appearances are more valued than the truth, it is easy to forget who we are on a deep level. The aim of honest, raw art journaling is to strengthen and reclaim authentic self-expression—to make it more familiar—more self-mirrored and self-validated—so that we can take our inner truth into the outer world.

When we do not see our inner visions in our outer world, art journaling can make our inner truth concrete and possible in a world where conformity is the norm. Since our inner world creates our outer world, finding a way to tend to our inner truths helps us to create our own life. The pressure to conform intensifies in our teen years. When I began a daily art journaling practice as a teenager, I was barely expressing myself truthfully to anyone.

I had visions for my life but could see no example of my inner truth in the outer world. I had no human mirror for the uniqueness that I felt inside. I walked
through my teen years not feeling seen, known, or mirrored – until I began art journaling.

In my journals, I discovered the joyful process of witnessing what was inside of me. As I saw the inside of myself - visually and tangibly on the outside in my art journals - I began to feel real, substantial, and important to myself. As my years of raw and honest art journaling progressed, I discovered I had a particularity - a uniqueness that I had not recognized when I was trying to conform in my outer life.

**Daily Journal Practice**

We are not supported in our western world to explore authentic creativity and honest self-expression. We are valued by how well we conform. In a busy, outer directed life, we could spend our entire life not looking within. Most of us avoid taking time for contemplation in the pursuit of distraction, diversion and paying the bills.

Daily, honest journaling can seem like just one extra thing to cross off our list until the surprise and aliveness of self-discovery begins to take hold. Disengaging away from our outer ego world - away from the "world of appearances" - to attend to some kind of regular authentic inner practice helps us to discern between the outer social self that we present to the world vs. our authentic, inner self-expression.

Working and engaging in the outer world requires a certain amount of "getting along" and agreeing with familial and societal structures. We have to fit into professional work roles and systems to earn a living. In our daily, practical lives we have to peaceably interact with people of various levels of understanding, interests, and life perspectives. We could call our private art journal practice our honesty practice - because in so many ways we live in a world of falsity. As a society, we do not yet fully share our inner truth with everyone we meet but we all need a sacred place to do so.
How to Create your Own Art Journal

By Kelley Luckett

Why Art Journal

Art journaling combines the written language and the visual language to give a greater breadth of expression and understanding. In essence, art journaling is the combination of art making and journaling with the intention to create greater insight and understanding of the self and others. Art journaling is about expression, both written and visual, of emotions and thoughts; it is a space for questions that may not have answers, a place for thoughts that may otherwise not have a home, a safe container for emotions so that they do not have to be loose in the world. Although the journal can become an extension of the self, it can also be a place to play and experiment with art materials. Enjoy the process, and listen to the art—it may have something to share with you too.

Basic Art Journal Kit

- A journal (see the section below or visit: http://artjournaling.blogspot.com/2011/08/choosing-journal.html)
- Watercolors
- Crayons/oil pastels
- Scissors (or ruler)
- Glue stick
- White acrylic paint
- Markers/gel pens
- Pencils (colored and regular)
- Papers (lots of textures)
- Ephemera bag (An ephemera bag is a bag of “the good stuff”—papers, images, and miscellanea to use in your art journal. In our house we call it a “mine’s bag.”)

A peek inside my travel art journal kit
Choosing a Journal

To begin art journaling you don't need a whole lot of supplies, but you do need a journal. Choosing a journal is a personal decision based on your own likes and dislikes, but there are lots of choices out there. Here is a round-up of several common types of journals with a list of pros and cons (plus my two cents!). I hope this might help some of you out there when trying to decide what to use for your next art journal, or possibly your first art journal.

Basic Bound Journal:
This is probably the most obvious choice for beginners, a basic bound sketchbook.

Pros: large variety of sizes, easily accessible (available at many stores), large variety of paper weights

Cons: blank Pages (can cause the "I don't want to ruin it" effect, or the "where to start" effect), some can be difficult to open flat

My Two Cents: This is a great easy choice for an art journal. The wide selection of papers and manufacturers will almost ensure that you can find something that you like and fits your needs. If blank pages are an issue, try a process of "un-blanking the pages," such as creating watercolor washes on all the pages prior to starting the art journal. Moleskine is my favorite of this category, as it has a closure to hold the book safely closed, and pockets to hold ephemera. See: (http://www.amazon.com/gp/search/ref=as_li_qf_sp_sr_il_tl?ie=UTF8&keywords=Moleskine%20watercolor&tag=artjourasacre-20&index=aps&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325)

Basic Spiral Journal:
Another obvious choice in journal selection is one that has a spiral binding.
Pros: large variety of sizes, easily accessible (available at many stores), large variety of paper weights, will easily lay flat

Cons: blank pages (can cause the "I don't want to ruin it" effect, or the "where to start" effect, the spiral can be difficult to work with when creating two-page spreads

My Two Cents: This is also a great choice for art “journalers”. Some artists love the ability to lay the journal flat. However since I almost always work in spreads, I do not like the spiral in the middle. Again, if blank pages are an issue, try a process of "un-blanking the pages," such as creating watercolor washes on all the pages prior to starting the art journal. Strathmore has recently launched a "Visual Journal" line that includes spiral bound art journals. (See [http://www.amazon.com/gp/search/ref=as_li_qf_sp_sr_il_tl?ie=UTF8&keywords=strathmore%20visual%20journal&tag=artjouasacre-20&index=aps&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325](http://www.amazon.com/gp/search/ref=as_li_qf_sp_sr_il_tl?ie=UTF8&keywords=strathmore%20visual%20journal&tag=artjouasacre-20&index=aps&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325))

Loose Pages as a Journal:
This journal format is simply using any type of paper that you might journal upon in a loose unbound form

Pros: infinite variety of sizes and shapes, probably have loose pages on hand, can discard pages if you mess up, can pre-arrange pages

Cons: some pages may get displaced or lost accidentally, no closure, can discard pages if you mess up

My Two Cents: For me the idea of the journal is imperative, as it keeps the imagery and ideas safe and contained. However, journaling on loose pages may be less threatening as there is nothing to fill, just one page at a time.
Hand-bound Journal:
This type of journal is one that has been bound by hand by you or someone else.

Pros: control of the paper, control of size, an art-form in itself, variety of binding techniques, supports other artists (if buying from someone)

Cons: requires some preparation time (if you are binding), learning curve (there is a learning curve, as with all new skills, and your first binding may not be as strong as you would like)

My Two Cents: This is also one of my favorite options as I like the idea of book-making. This category has so many variations, however, that it is difficult to list all the pros and cons. I personally like to bind my books out of discarded materials, making it a transformative process, for example. But many artists will choose high quality artists papers to bind their books which can also be very fulfilling but causes "the blank page effect." If you decide to bind your own book, I will warn you that it can become addictive! But it is so rewarding to create your own art journal from start to finish!

Altered Book: This type of journal re-purposes a book as an art journal.
Pros: cheap (we often buy books at Goodwill for 25¢, but could also get free), recycling (I see this as a green alternative to buying new), no blank-page effect (working on pages with stuff already on them may not be as overwhelming), metaphor of transformation (taking something discarded and making it a work of art)

Cons: pages are not made to create art on (paper quality and thickness may not be appropriate for art-making), may require some preparation time (“gessoing” pages—gluing pages together for added thickness)

My Two Cents: This is one of my favorite types of art journals. I love the metaphor of transformation, as I believe that art journaling is a transformative process. Additionally there are infinite varieties of books out there to alter. Children's books are often short and have few pages and so are great for a defined theme or as a beginning journal. The limited pages make it easy to finish and not as overwhelming. (Read more about altering board books below.) Larger books, such as atlases, are also great for journals. Since my style has evolved to a very mixed-media style, I also like being able to show some of the original book pages in my artwork.

How to Alter Board Books

One way of creating an art journal is to alter a board book (the small cardboard books usually enjoyed by young children).

Step One:
Start with your board book. This one is just a small Christmas book I picked up at Goodwill.
Step Two:
You might want to prepare the pages if they are really slick. This can be done in multiple ways.

- Gesso— Gesso the pages (the disadvantage to this is drying time)
- Sandpaper— Lightly sand all the pages so that the slickness is taken away.
- Peel— Peel the paper layer off the cardboard layer. This is actually really simple, and they usually peel off in whole sheets.

Step Three:
Begin creating art in whatever manner you wish. In the image below, I added collaged book pages on top of the cardboard pages. I like the way this looks in my art, and I like to have bits of the type showing through sometimes; it also “de-blanked” the cardboard pages (a technique I find highly useful when trying to figure out how/where to start!).  

[Images of book pages and sandpapering process]
Some Finished Pages:
These are pages from another board book that I am working on. Each page has a flap, or door on it and they are so much fun to incorporate into the art-making. I feel like this book is turning into tidbits of virtues or values, and I am really enjoying working on it.

How to Incorporate Writing for Those Who Are Writing-Shy

- Make lists
- Use a thought-provoking title for your page
- Use poems, quotes, lyrics
- Look at your artwork and write down words that come to mind
- Write a poem using those words
- Don’t worry about grammar or spelling
**Journal Prompts:**
- your favorite song/poem
- something you are proud of
- self-portrait
- an important person in your life
- your favorite symbol
- journal about your week
- a secret wish
- your lifeline
- a question you ask yourself
- something or someone you miss
- dreams
- family/friends
- something you are scared of
- a letter to yourself
- create a page using only your favorite color
- your inner goddess/warrior
- the masks you wear
- a vision page of what you want your life to be
- a bucket list
- a word (open the dictionary and pick one at random)
- and anything else your mind or heart can ponder

**How to Incorporate Art for Those Who Are Art-Shy**

- Use color washes
- Use ephemera scraps from your day/week
- Try Collaging
- Don’t worry about making it pretty

**Art Journaling Techniques**

I created a basic art journal handout which includes my conception of what an art journal is, how to incorporate art and writing in your journal, some basic techniques, some basic art journal prompts, what to include in a basic art journal
kit, how to incorporate art journaling into your life, and some resources. You can download it here [http://artjournaling.blogspot.com/p/art-journal-handout.html](http://artjournaling.blogspot.com/p/art-journal-handout.html)

**Writing Styles**

This is a reference sheet that I created to demonstrate different writing styles to use in your art journal.

![Writing Styles](image)

I made this page up to show the art journal groups that I work with and to encourage them to add text in their art journals. It is also a reminder for me to utilize several types of text in my journals.

1. Masking Tape Mask - Put masking tape down where you would like your words to be. Paint and let dry. Peel up the tape and write in the area masked off (I chose to stamp in this version but you could handwrite as well)
2. Draw your own set of lines to write between
3. Cut out letters from magazines to spell your words
4. Write with a gel pen in a light color, and outline the letters with a dark gel pen (using cursive font)
5. Write with your non-dominant hand
6. Create 3-D lettering (Check out Teesha Moore's “YouTube” Series on Penmanship for more information
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07Aadcfmpwc&feature=related )
7. Use letter stamps
8. Go over each letter several times to give it a scratchy effect
9. Fill in the bubbles of the letters and outline everything in a contrasting color
10. Cursive writing with the bubbles of the letters colored in a variety of colors
11. Cutting out full words from magazines
12. Write with a white crayon or oil pastel and create a watercolor wash on top of it
13. Use a bamboo pen and India ink (experiment with different pens and found objects such as sticks)
14. Write with a gel pen in a light color, and outline the letters with a dark gel pen (using a print font with small serifs added)
15. Block out each letter with color (here I used oil pastels) and stamp letters on top of it
16. Write with a gel pen in a dark color, and outline the letters with a light gel pen
17. Write on masking tape and add to your journal

Experiment with different writing utensils, pencils, pens. Scratch words into paint, into oil pastels. Be creative, and don't worry about messing something up. You can almost always fix it, or change it or cover it up and start over. Sometimes the best results come from mistakes or accidents.

To Learn about Parallel Art Journaling, visit
http://artjournaling.blogspot.com/p/parallel-art-journaling.html

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Additional Resource:

Exercising to prepare to create art is as important as exercising for sports or rehearsals for theater as it fosters a continual pursuit of excellence. In this lesson, to exercise their artist creativity, students keep a day-by-day art journal. Each page should be a simple statement of a different idea or small thought for the day.
This Dick Blick lesson plan is designed for school age children to adults. Please visit

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Special thanks to Shelley Klammer who graciously gave permission to Hildegard Center to re-post this activity to “Art Bridges”. Shelley is a Registered Counselling Therapist and a Registered Counselling Supervisor with the Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists in Canada. She currently works in Canada’s largest therapeutic art studio, Artworks Studio, for adults at the end of life with dementia and/or physical and mental challenges. While she is designated as a counselling therapist, she has logged over 11,000 art therapy hours in the studio and feels blessed to have worked with hundreds of clients from all walks of life in this creative capacity over the years. Please visit www.expressiveartworkshops.com to learn more about Shelley, her workshops and books, and her work.

Heartfelt thanks to artist and art therapist Kelley Luckett (formerly Kelley Brown), who graciously gave permission to Hildegard Center to re-post this activity from her blog http://artjournaling.blogspot.com. In her personal and professional artistic journey, Kelley found that art journaling allowed her to “break all the rules” she had learned and in turn opened up creativity she did not know existed. Please visit her blog which chronicles her ongoing projects. Kelley has presented on the topic of art journaling at universities and the National Art Therapy Conference along with several other local venues. Her blog and work were recently featured on Psychology Today’s Healing Arts blog, https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/arts-and-health/201006/cool-art-
therapy-intervention-4-visual-journaling in an article about art journaling as an art.

Special thanks to Dick Blick for giving Hildegard Center permission to provide a link to this lesson. In addition to offering quality art supplies at a great value, Dick Blick (www.dickblick.com) also provides wonderful project ideas created for all ages and skill levels. Every project also meets National Standards for Visual Arts Education.

If you have used this activity, we’d love to hear from you! Please send questions or comments through our website www.hildegardcenter.org.

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