

# Daily Visual Journal



# Introduction

On June 5th, 2009 I decided to start creating a visual journal on individual pieces of paper. This gave me a little more freedom with techniques since the pages were not bound together. The idea of my daily visual journal began as a challenge to myself to create art everyday and generate my own inspiration. This book illustrates some of the techniques used to create my daily visual journal pages and how you can incorporate these techniques into your own daily visual journal.

In addition, each technique is followed by a self reflection prompt for you to think about and write about on the backside of your visual journal entry. Sometimes while creating a visual journal entry I have a thought in mind and it informs the artwork, other times I'm just playing with technique and process.



# Supply List

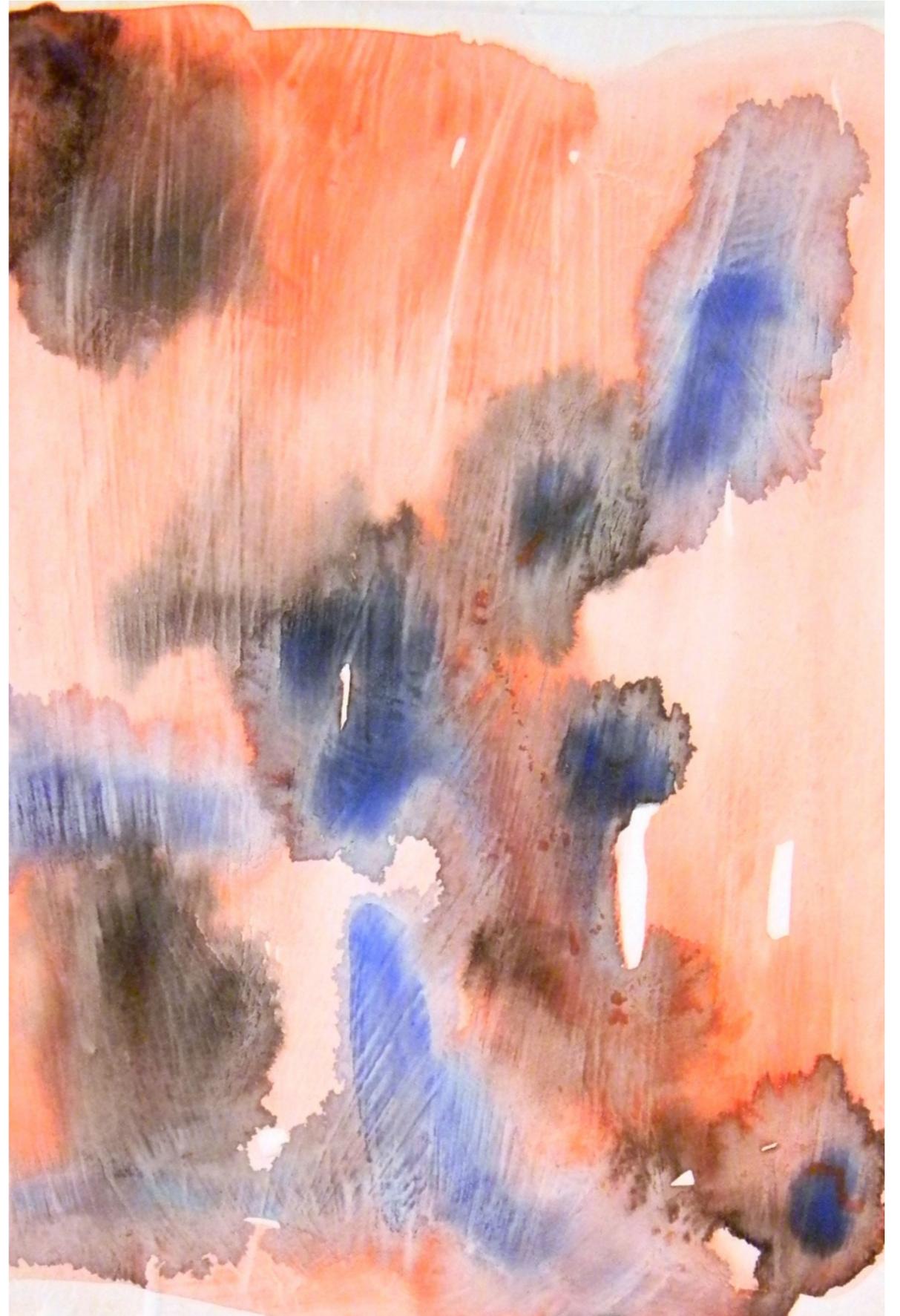
THIS LIST DOES NOT INCLUDE EVERYTHING - USE YOUR FAVORITE MATERIALS AND TRY SOME NEW ONES!

- Visual journal bases - 4" x 5" tag board, 4" x 6" blank index cards, or something similar like cardstock
- Gesso
- Acrylic paint
- Watercolor paint
- Paintbrushes - various sizes
- Pencils - regular and colored
- Pens - archival acid free - gel pens, colored ink pens...
- Markers - archival acid free
- Paper - old, new, with colors and patterns - save junk mail envelopes, they have great patterns on the inside
- Magazines for cutting out images
- Scissors and craft knife - (small nail cutting scissors are great for complex edges)
- Fabric - scraps from old projects or old clothes
- Sewing needles and thread - Sewing machine (optional)
- Glue sticks and liquid glue - archival acid free - Mod Podge is also a great supply to have for gluing and finishing.
- Ink stamps



# Preparing Journal Pages

To stay motivated and inspired, I recommend preparing a stack of bases before you begin so that you have materials ready to go for the week. I have outlined here four techniques I use the most when preparing my bases ahead of time. It works well and I'm not rushing or frustrated when I sit down to work on my entry for the day.



# Gesso

### SUPPLIES:

1. Cardstock base
2. Gesso
3. Paintbrush
4. Water and rags for cleanup

Preparing your base with gesso gives a strong and interesting surface for your daily visual journal. Start by covering your working surface with parchment paper or something else to protect your surface from the gesso. Lay your bases on the parchment paper and, using your paintbrush, cover with a coat of gesso. When that is dry, apply another coat of gesso. If you are using a colored or manilla tag board, you could apply gesso only to the center of the base leaving uneven edges to the white gesso. It is simple but adds interest; the edges provide a type of frame for your work on the white surface. Also, will see the texture lines of your brushstrokes, which can add interest to your journal page and be used as inspiration for your journal entry.

### GALLERY 1.1 Preparing Journal Pages - Gesso



Gesso on background.

# Paint

## SUPPLIES:

1. Cardstock base
2. Acrylic paint
3. Paintbrush
4. Water and rags for cleanup

Another option is to cover your page with acrylic paint. You can start by covering the page with white gesso and when the gesso is dry, coating the page with a different color of acrylic. You can prepare some pages with a solid color of paint or before the acrylic dries, you can take the back end of your paintbrush and drag lines through the acrylic paint, revealing the white gesso underneath while creating textured lines on your page.

You could use layers of different colors in acrylic paint and when dragging lines through the top layer, other colors will show through. This technique gives you a lot of options and can sometimes be a finished piece in itself.

## GALLERY 1.2 Preparing Journal Pages - Gesso



Paint on background with texture lines.

# Paper

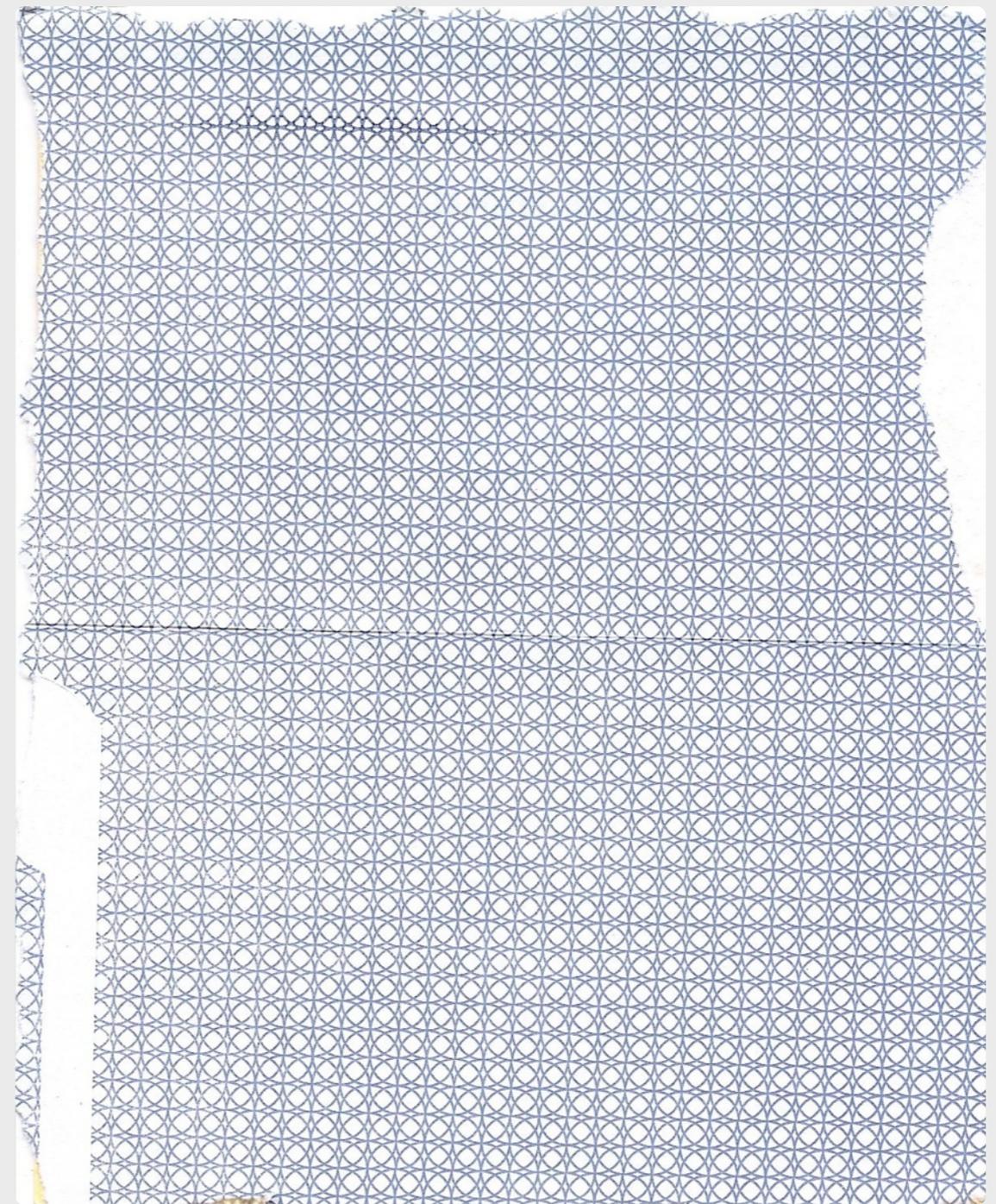
## SUPPLIES:

1. Cardstock base
2. Patterned paper - scrapbook paper, magazine paper, or old security envelope with the pattern on the inside
3. Glue stick
4. Scissors or craft knife

Scrap paper and junk mail can be a great source of supplies for preparing your journal pages. The inside of a security envelope has great patterns and can be used as a background for collage or doodle. Other suggestions for covering your journal base: reply cards from magazines, old postcards or notecards, wrapping paper, old book pages, and any other piece of paper that has an interesting pattern, color, or texture.

Start by covering your cardstock base with glue, then lay the glue side of the base down on the back side of the patterned paper. (I find this way easier than putting your patterned paper on top of the glue). Smooth out the paper and carefully cut around the edges of the base or tear off the excess paper.

GALLERY 1.3 Preparing Journal Pages - Paper



Junk mail security envelope used to cover journal base.

# Printing

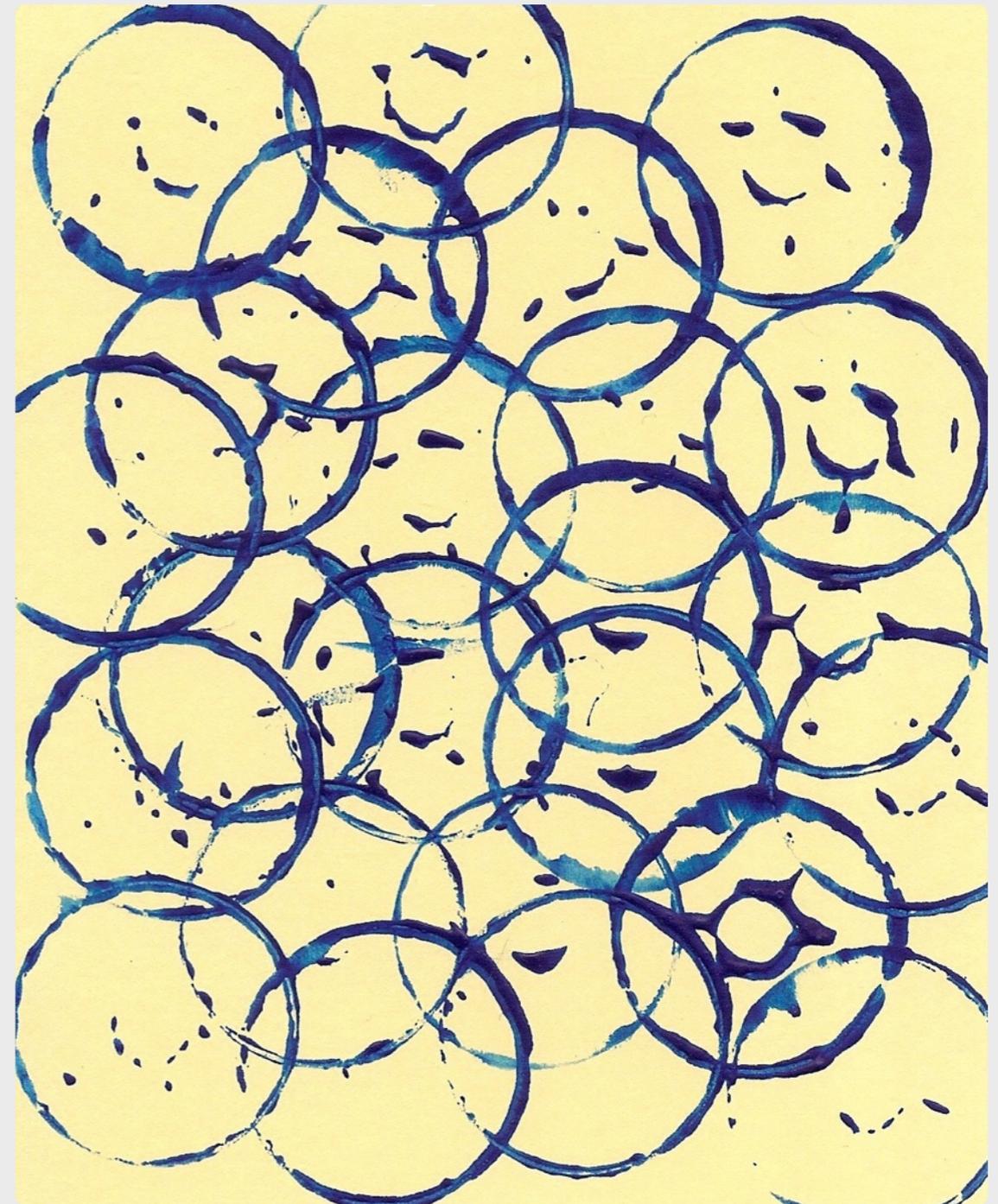
## SUPPLIES:

1. Base paper - plain or covered with gesso
2. Ink pad or paint for printing
3. Something to stamp with - a commercial stamp or a found object
4. Water and rags for cleanup

Almost any material can be used to print an all over pattern onto your journal base. Commercial ink stamps are great for this. Coat your stamp with ink from an ink pad or mix up a color of acrylic ink and use that to coat your stamp. Press down on your base repeatedly until you cover the background paper or until your happy with the look of it.

Experiment with different objects and different ink or paint on your surface. Sometimes the result of the printed surface itself is a beautiful finished piece.

## GALLERY 1.4 Preparing Journal Pages - Printing



Printing on background.

# Techniques

There are so many ways to create your daily visual journal and everyone will have unique and personal results. These techniques are intended to inspire you and act as a springboard for your imagination. Tell your story with your own personal visual language!

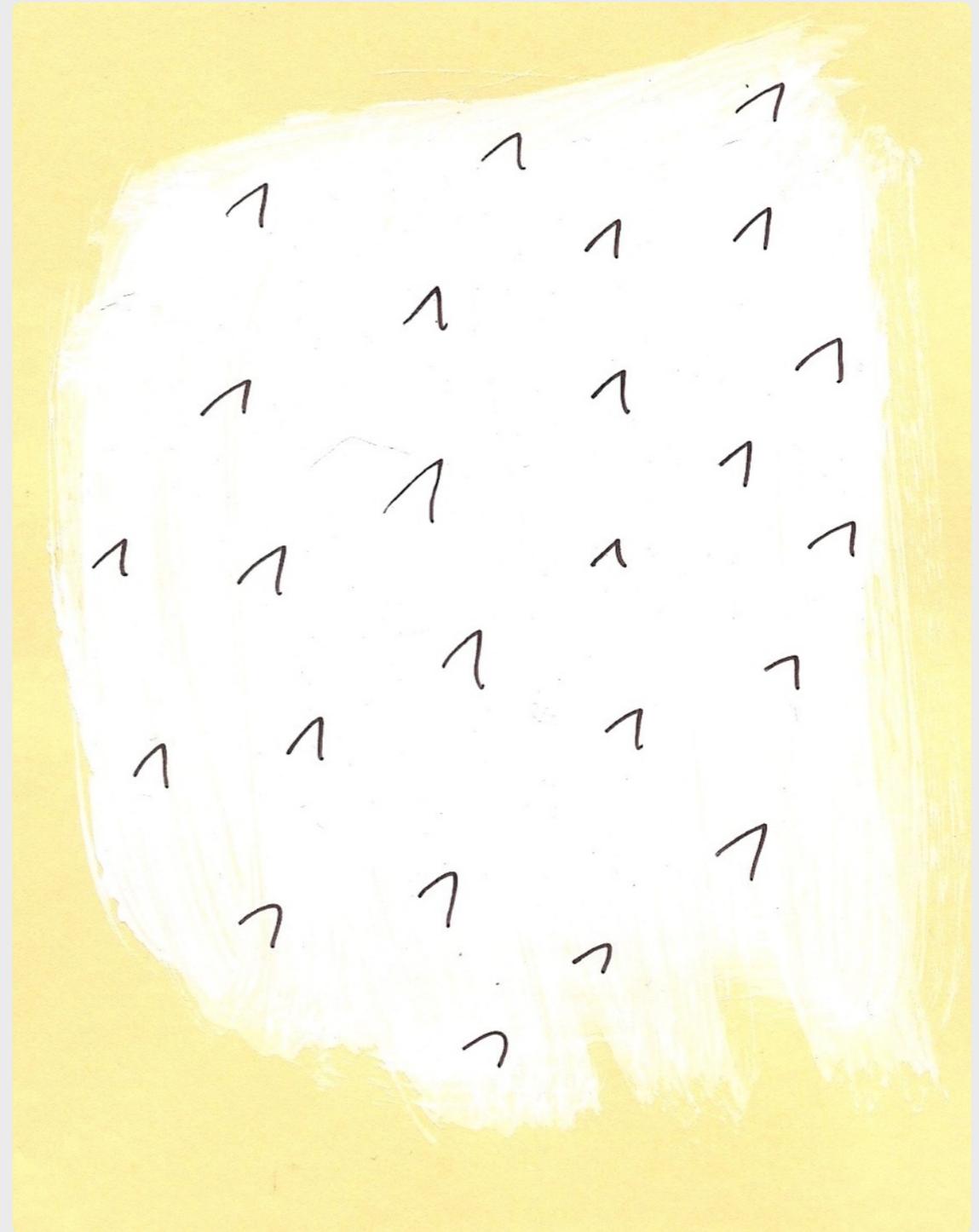


# Doodle

## SUPPLIES

1. Base paper
2. Pencil or pen

## GALLERY 2.1 Doodle

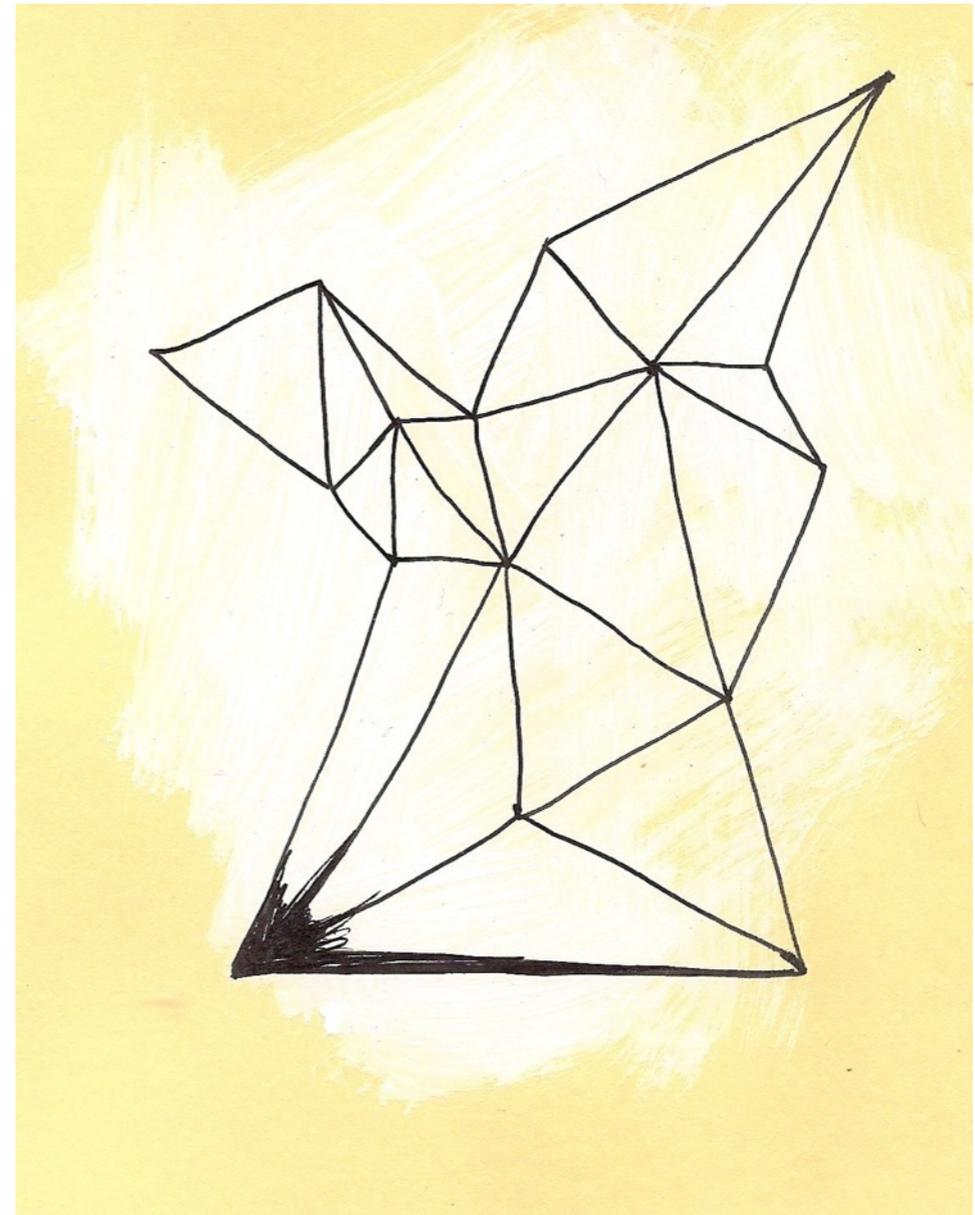


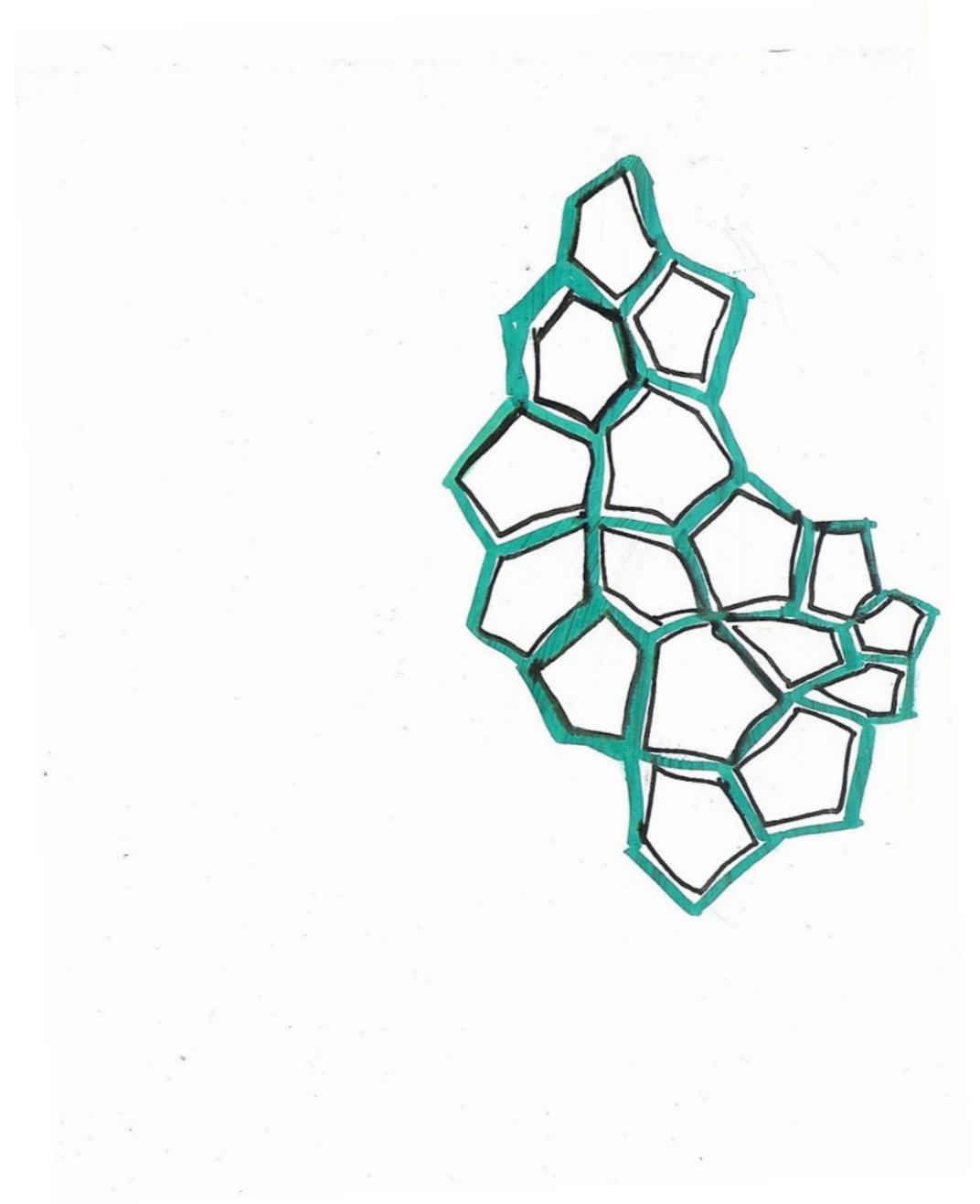
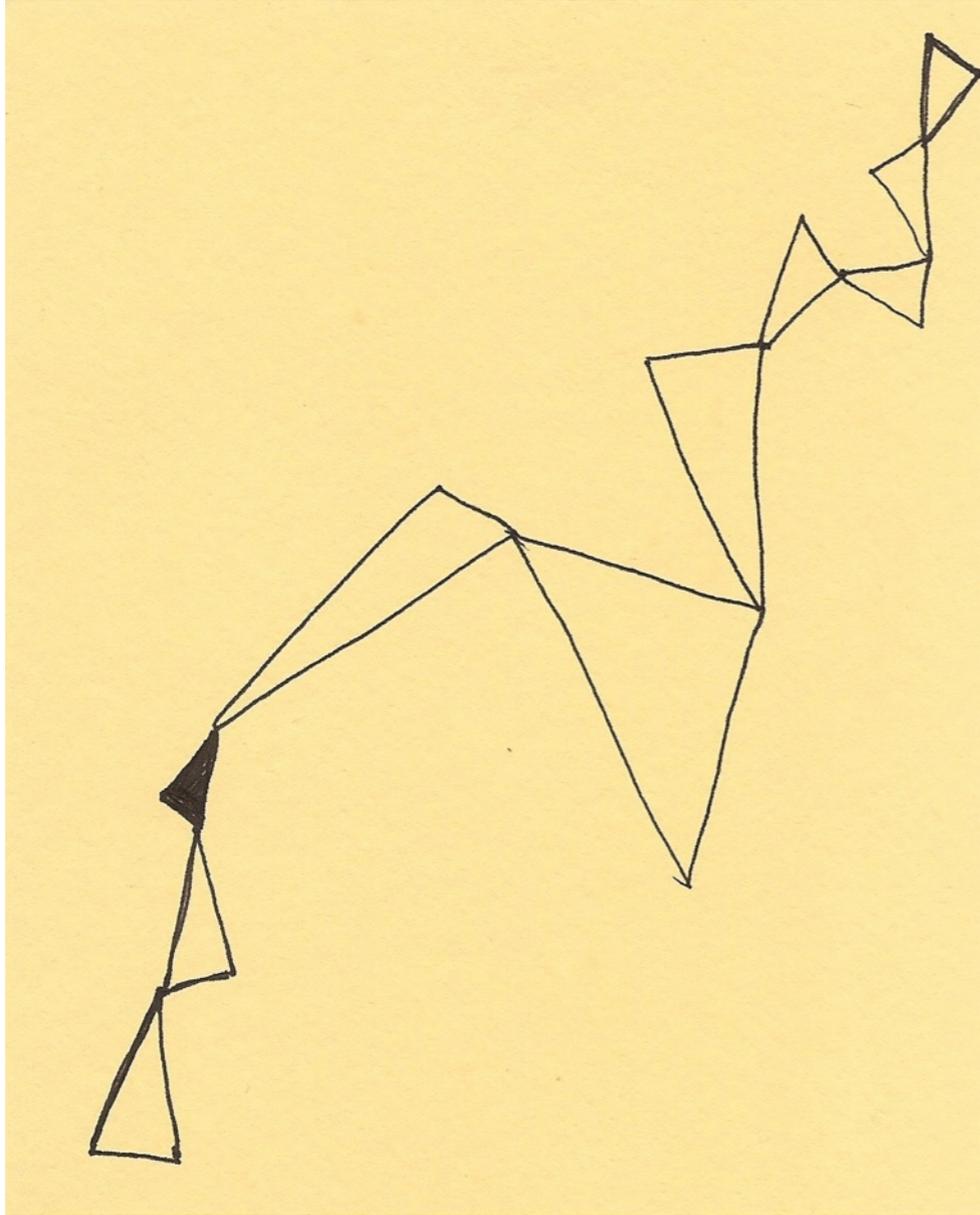
Ink and marker doodle on gesso covered paper.

A doodle can be simple and satisfying. A quick expression of your day or mood using lines or shapes. Try filling your page by drawing a line with a pen or pencil, then connect another line to the first but going in a different direction. Continue this over and over until you are satisfied. Or, start by drawing a triangle. Connect another triangle to the first. Continue connecting triangles, either of the same size or all different sizes, until you fill the page or create an interesting design. This technique is also a great way to enhance the background bases prepared with paint. Take an acrylic covered base and with a pen, create a collection of joined circles meandering across the page.

## *Self Reflection:*

What kind of doodle did you create? Did you let yourself create spontaneously or did you plan and organize your design? Write about the process, how it felt while creating, and what the final image means to you.





# Watercolor on Gesso

## SUPPLIES

1. Background paper with gesso
2. Watercolor paints and brush
3. Pencil

GALLERY 2.2 Watercolor paint on gesso with pencil



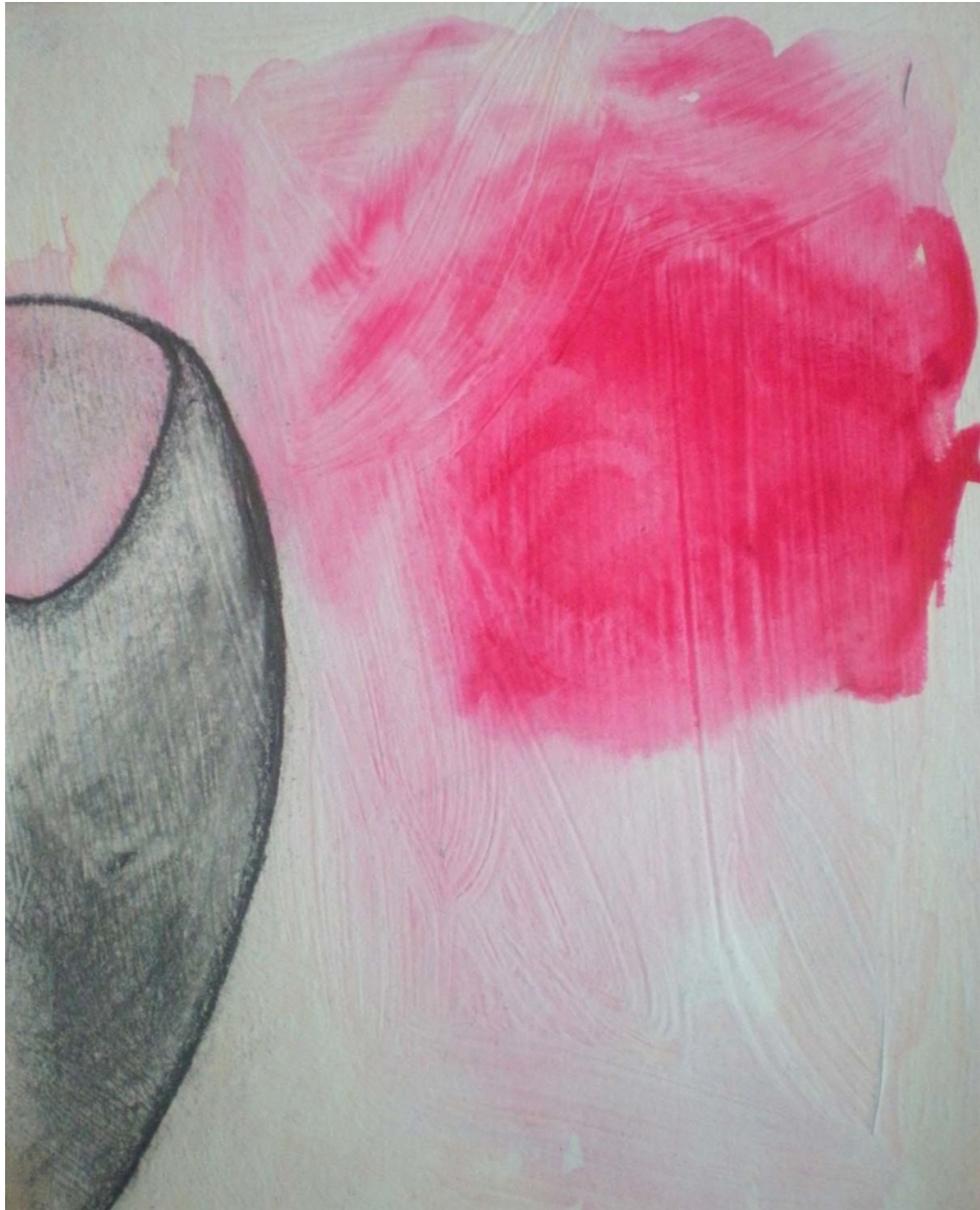
Watercolor on gesso with pencil.

Using watercolor paints over gesso covered paper creates an abstract pattern of textured lines. To begin, place your gesso covered background base on your work surface and paint over it with a wash of watercolor. Use more colors if you like - letting them mix together spontaneously while the paint is wet, or let the colors dry before adding the next. Take this time to experiment with the paint and play with the process. The watercolor paint will create an interesting surface over the texture of the gesso - the paint will follow the texture of the gesso and dry in light and dark areas. Look closely and you will see beautiful lines meandering across the page - follow those lines with a pencil accenting the shapes.

## *Self Reflection:*

This process can be a very intuitive and meditative exercise. What are you reminded of when looking at the finished piece? Write this on the back of your visual journal entry when the watercolor paint is dry.





# Pocket

## SUPPLIES:

1. Background paper with solid color paper or paint.
2. A piece of cardstock the size of your background.
3. Magazine image or fabric
4. Glue
5. Scissors

GALLERY 2.3 Pocket



Pocket created with card stock and magazine paper.

You can make a simple pocket using a magazine image and cardstock. Prepare your base by covering it with patterned or plain paper. Find a magazine image that will fit on your base without going over the edges - this image will be the pocket. Carefully cut this image around the edges and glue it to a separate piece of cardstock, cut the edge of the cardstock to match while leaving an 1/8" border of cardstock showing around the edge. Now glue the pocket onto your base by putting glue on only three edges of the underside of the pocket then putting it in place along the edge of your base. Another way to attach the pocket to your base would be to sew the edges of the pocket using a zig zag stitch on your sewing machine or a blanket stitch by hand.

## *Self Reflection:*

Pockets can be a safe place to hold something important. Think about the pocket you created and what you will keep inside it - write about this on the back.





# Inkblot

## SUPPLIES

1. Plain background or a gesso covered base
2. Ink, acrylic, and /or watercolor paint

GALLERY 2.4 Inkblot



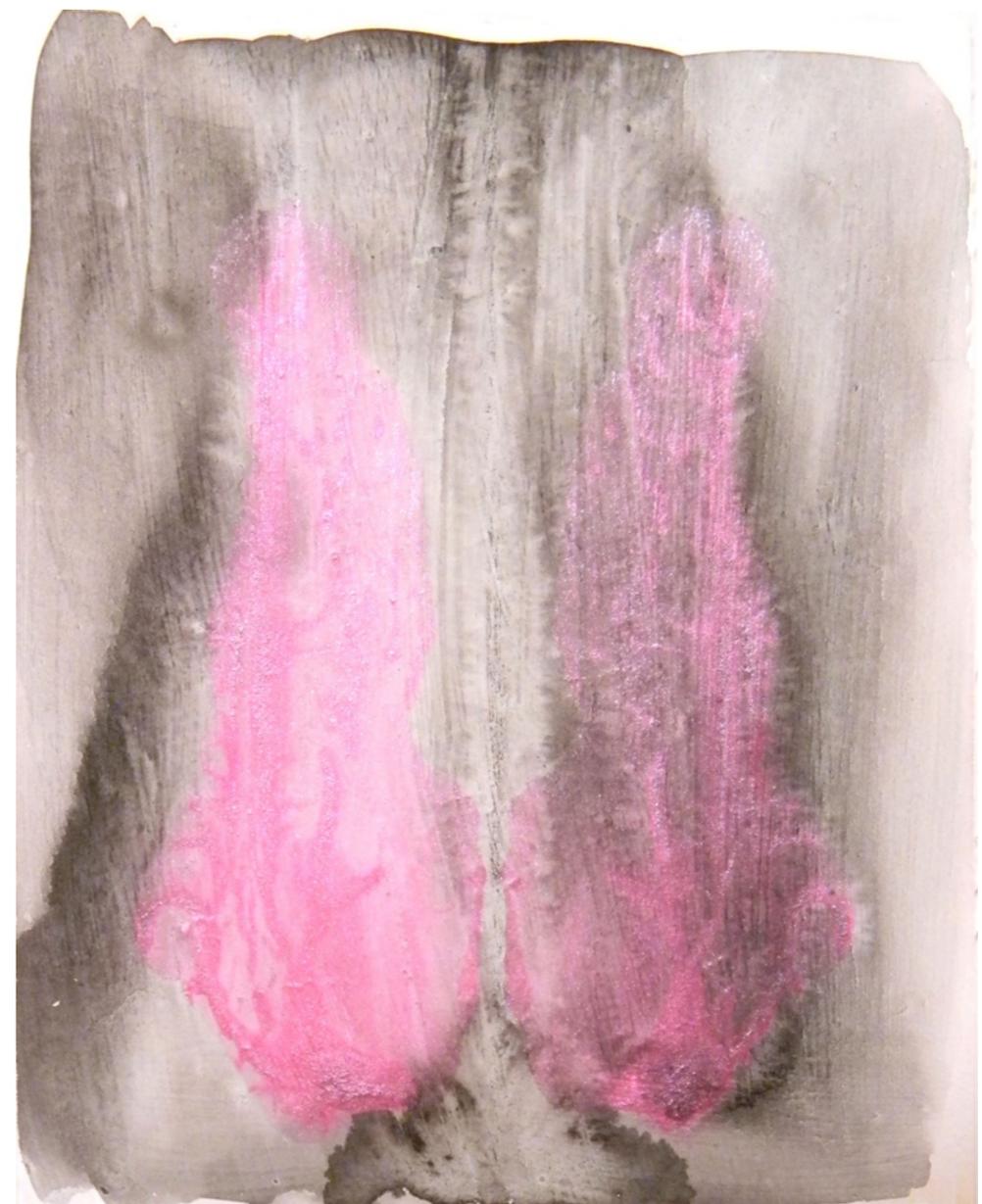
Inkblot with ink and watercolor paint on gesso covered cardstock.

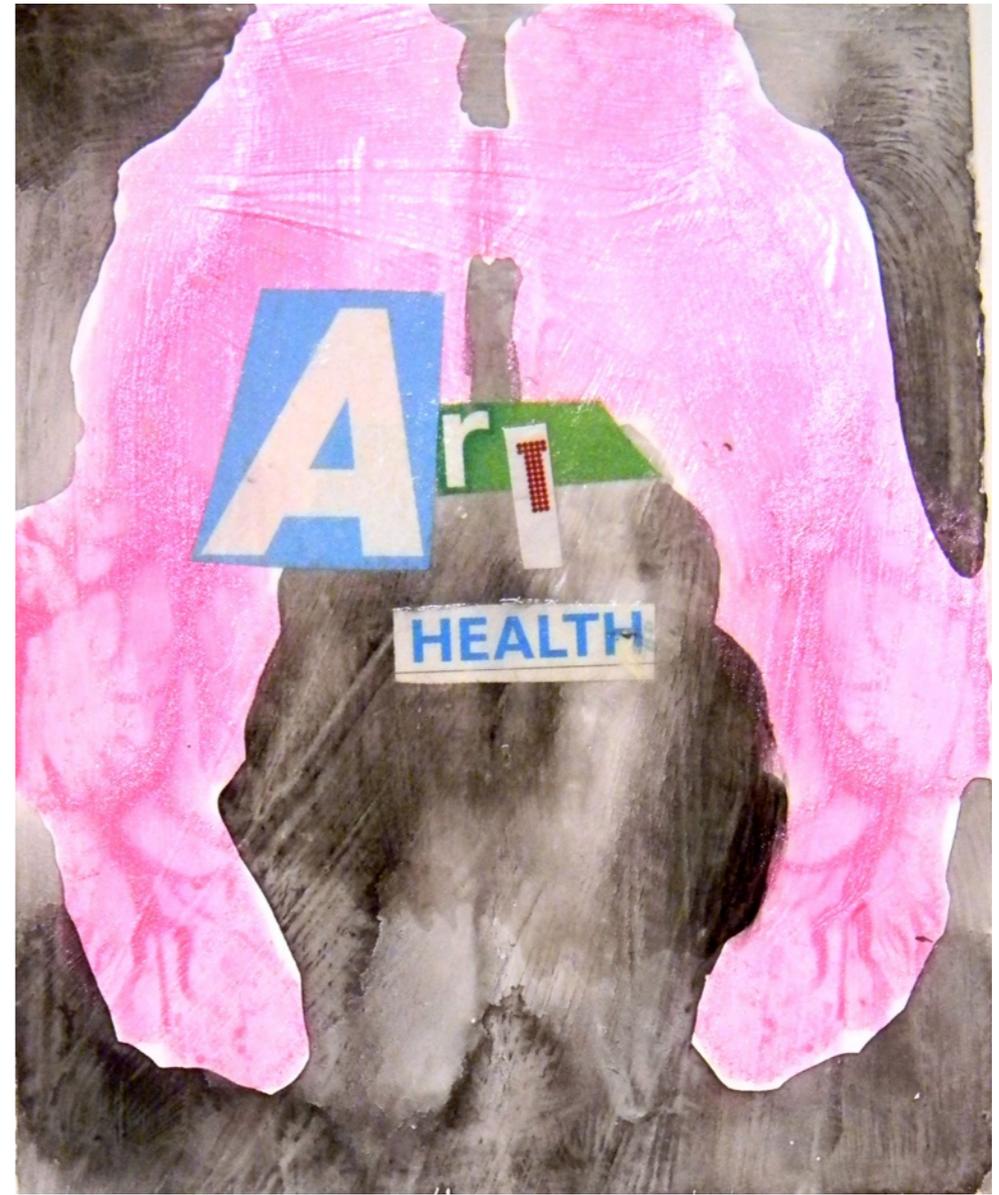
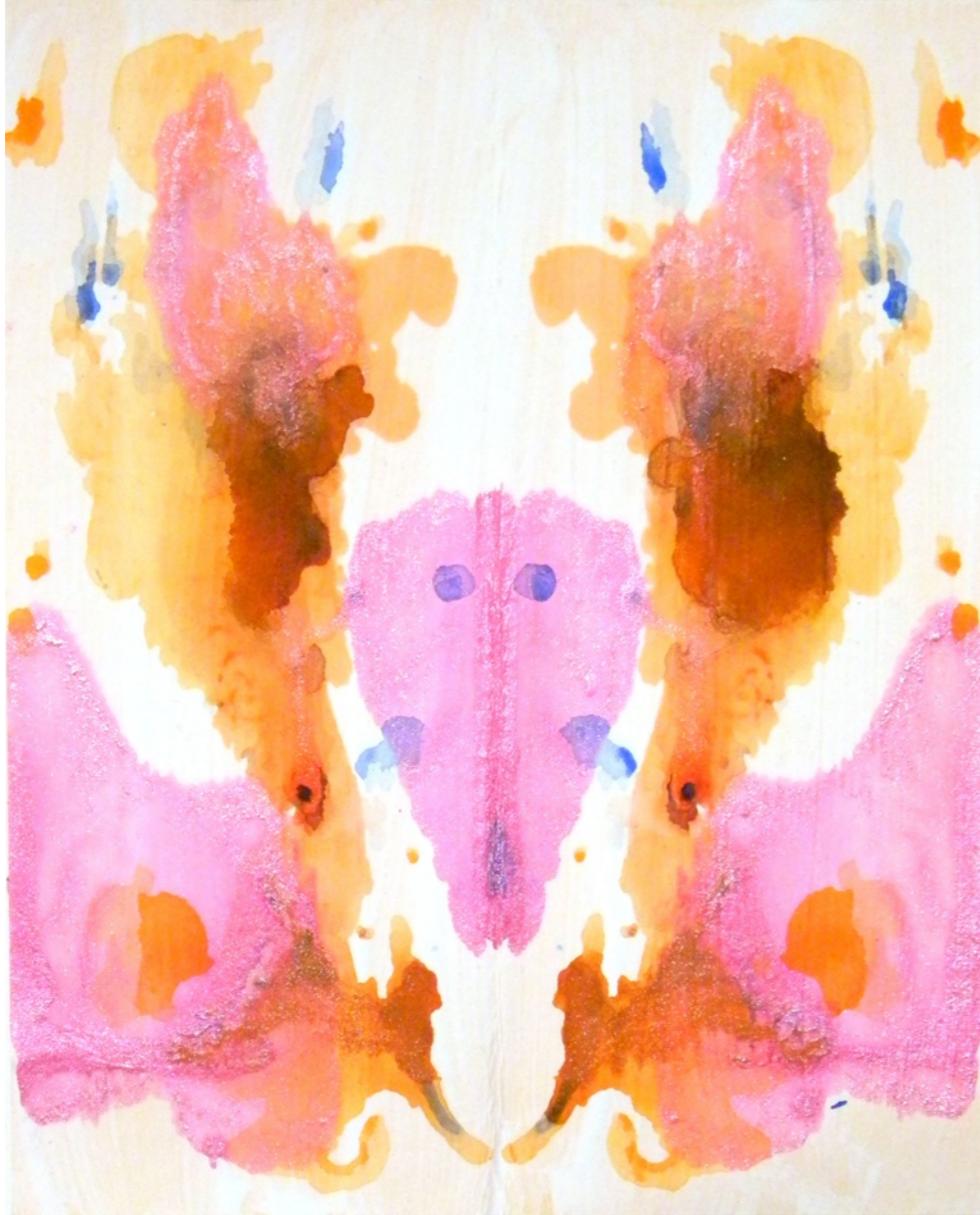
Creating an Inkblot image is a simple process that can create a dramatic result. Take your daily visual journal base and fold it in half either vertically or horizontally. Open it up and place a few drops of ink or paint on one side of your fold line.

Carefully fold the base again along the fold line, rub the backside of the base, then slowly open it flat. Let the surface dry before working on it more. This is a fun way to experiment with creating organic and unexpected shapes. Enhance the ink blot if desired by adding charcoal, watercolor, or magazine collage.

## *Self Reflection:*

What shape did your ink create? Does the shape look like something specific to you or give you a certain feeling? Write your thoughts on the back.





# Repeating Shapes

## SUPPLIES:

1. Background paper with solid color paper or paint
2. Paper punch: circle, square, star, heart...
3. Glue
4. Sewing machine / needle and thread optional

GALLERY 2.5 Repeating Shapes



Small triangles repeated and arranged in pattern.

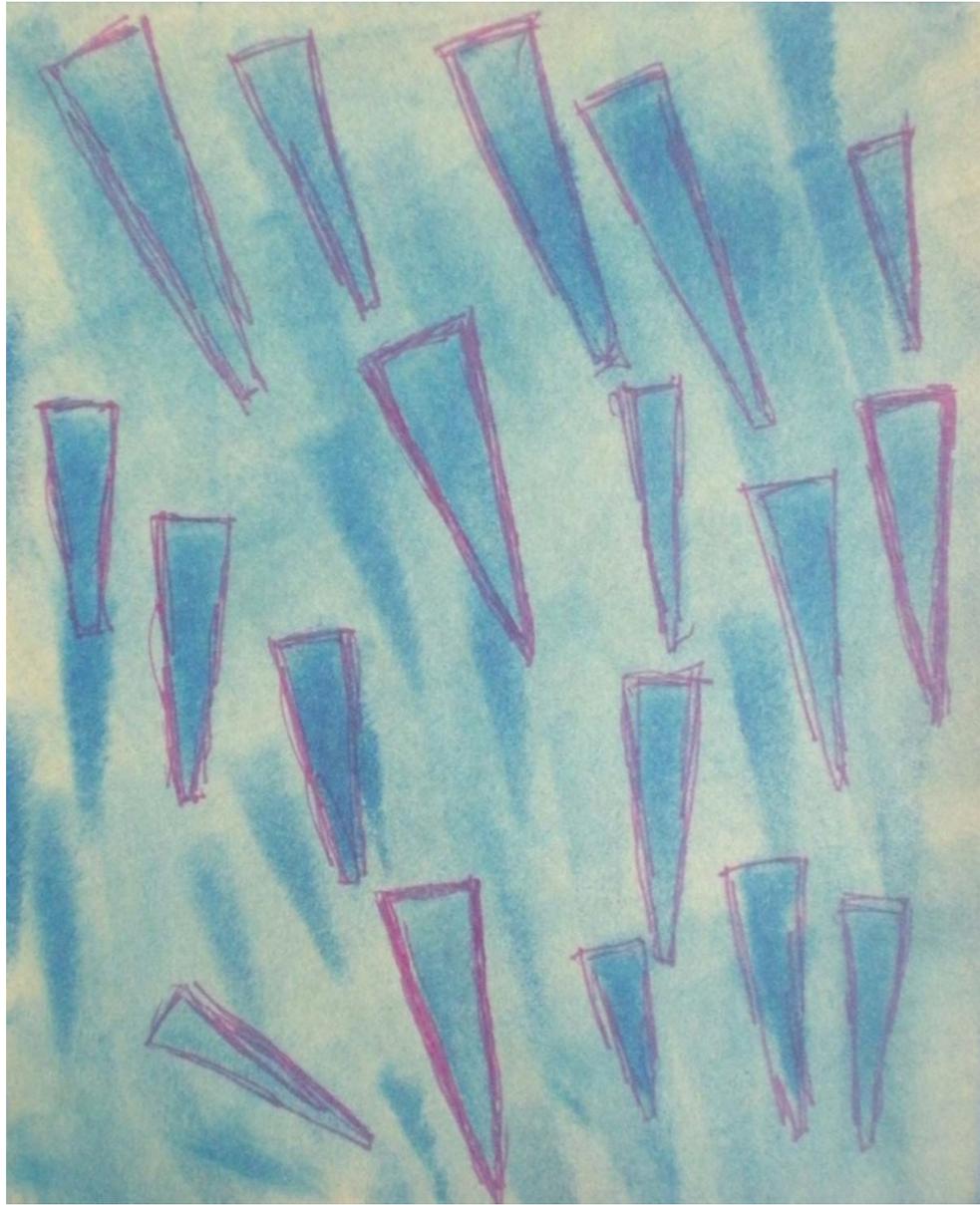
The repetition of a pattern helps to unify the piece and create rhythm. Repetition of shape can be used to create harmonious design; just think of wallpaper or patterned carpet; the back of woven chair; a tile floor; the brick pattern of a house. All these patterns let our eye travel across the art comfortably and the pattern becomes soothing.

To create a journal page that employs repetition try using a paper punch to cut out a stack of colorful paper of the same shape. You can use old magazine pages to get various colors or use one color or try a family of colors like 3 different shades of green. Take these shapes and arrange them on your base - overlap the shapes - turn them - play around. When you're happy with the composition, glue them in place - or use your sewing machine and stitch directly through the layers of paper using a bright or contrasting thread.

## *Self Reflection:*

What patterns do you find soothing? Does your visual journal page of repeating shapes create a soothing pattern?





# Collage

SUPPLIES:

1. Background
2. Magazine images
3. Glue stick
4. Scissors

GALLERY 2.6 Collage



Magazine image collage.

Collage can be so many things and represent so many ideas. You can create an abstract design using different magazine images and layering them in unexpected ways. You can create a still life using everyday images from magazines to create a new story. Try starting with the patterned paper of a security envelope glued to your base. Layer a magazine image or two over that background, then color in some of the spaces of the patterned background. By combining images and patterns in new ways, you create a new environment; you get to control and change the image to be more of what you desire. How will you create your world?

## *Self Reflection:*

Describe your collage on the back of your journal page. Did you create a still life type image? An abstract? What does the image mean to you?

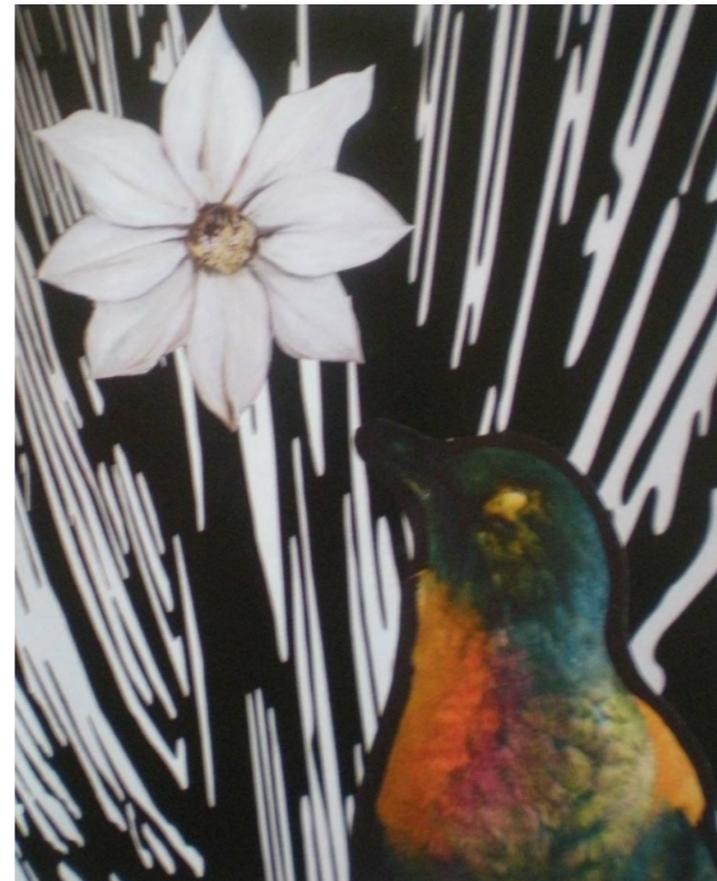
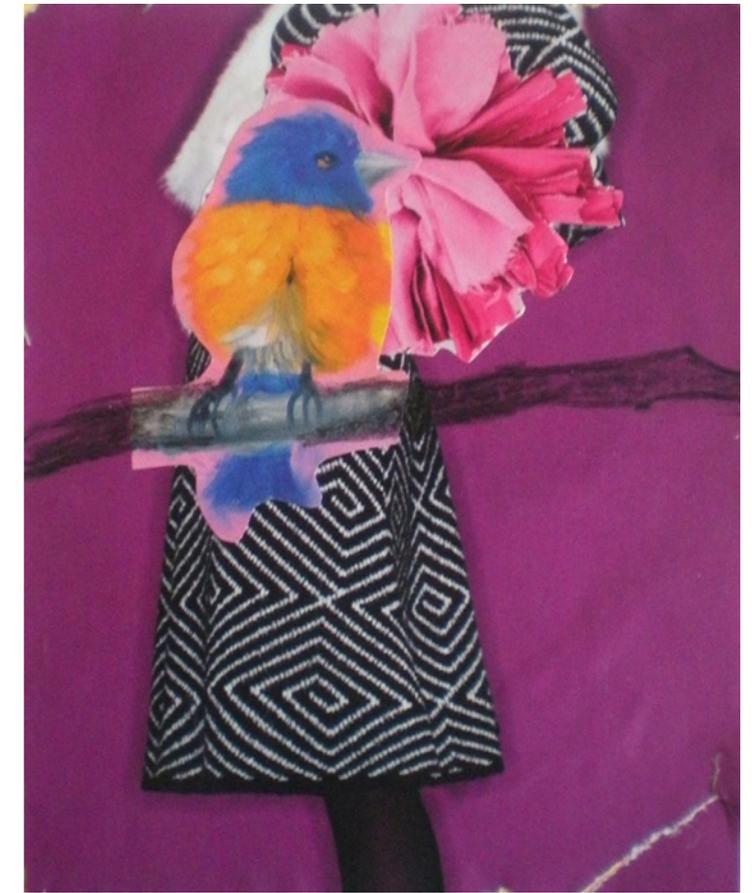




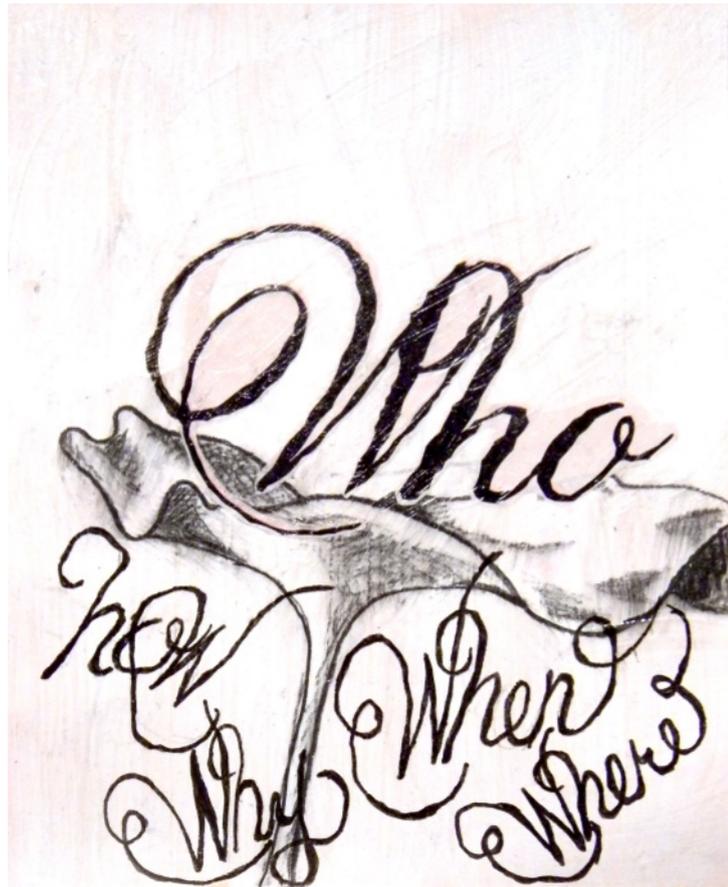
# Inspiration

A collection of some of my favorite visual journal pieces I have done over the years.





Collage is a popular technique used for visual journaling. Gathering images from various sources and combining them to create a new visual story. I like to combine bold color and stitching for more texture. Using a magazine with text for a background and then painting over that text creates an interesting background because you know the words are there, but they are no longer legible, changing the original purpose and meaning.



# Resources

A short list of the supplies I use and where to get them.



- **Utrecht Art Supplies** : gesso in large gallon buckets (great if you paint a lot, maybe a little much for these daily visual journal pieces); acrylic paint; archival ink; paint brushes; sketchbooks and paper; drawing pencils
- **Dick Blick** : art supplies like Utrecht
- **Michaels** : gel pens; archival pens and markers; fun patterned paper (scrapbook section); acrylic paint; gesso; Mod Podge; glue sticks; tissue paper
- **JoAnns** : needles; thread; fabric; yarn; gel pens; archival pens and markers; fun patterned paper (scrapbook section); acrylic paint; gesso; Mod Podge
- **Thrift Stores** : you never know what fun materials you will find at a thrift store!
- **Office Depot** : or any other office supply store for 4x6 index cards; pens
- Your own stash of materials : I now save all kinds of junk mail paper; interesting packing material; candy wrappers; stray threads; and anything I can glue or stitch onto my daily visual journal page.



# Thank You!

Thank you for purchasing my ebook, *Daily Visual Journal*. I would love to see what you create and invite you to join in the discussion and inspiration at my websites: [Kelly Darke Fine Art](#) and [Daily Visual Journal](#).

