



KEEP AN ART JOURNAL



First of all, why even keep an art journal?

Well the main reason is that there are ideas and feelings and drawings and inventions and who know what else just waiting inside you. That is why so many artists, writers, musicians, thinkers and tinkerers of all kinds use journals to explore and express their ideas.

[Art journal from artjournalist.com]



That is also why there are as many different kinds of art journals as there are kinds of people. And when you create your own, there will be no other art journal like it in the entire world.

Below are some journals we came across, but if you want to see about a million more, just do a web search for “art journals.”

[Art journal samples in order: Dietrich Guilherme, Frida Kahlo, Celestine Hart, Sarah@HubPages, Dan Eldon, Lynda Barry]



An art journal is especially important during difficult times (like, say, a pandemic) because it can give you a place to let out your feelings — your worry, your fear, your sadness, your frustration, and of course, your love, your hope, your wisdom, your gratitude.

Not only do you get to release all those swirling emotions, but you get to turn them into art.

[Artwork by Areeba Siddique]

Step 1 of 12

For this project you will need:

An art journal or sketchbook (if you want to make your own, [head over here](#))

Writing and drawing materials — pencils, pens, crayons, whatever you have

(Optional) Collaging materials: scissors, glue or tape, and some magazines, newspapers or junk mail

Step 2 of 12

The hardest part is getting started, so we recommend diving right in with...

Art Journal Exercise #1: Make a mess.

Why make a mess? Because for one thing it feels amazing — especially if you're a bit of a perfectionist. Also, when you set yourself free, you often create something that your trying-to-be-perfect brain would have never come up with.

Here are some ways to get messy...



Step 3 of 12

Imagine your pen is a mouse scurrying around the page (or pages if you're doing both the left and right side of your journal). Dart and dash and spin around like you're being chased by a cat.

Write your name (or other words) in different styles—big and bold, jagged and swirly, balloony and towering, backwards and upside down.

Glue or tape pictures or words from a magazine or junk mail — don't worry if you're covering up your letters and lines —that's part of making a mess!

Trace your hand. Find an object or two and trace them too. It's okay if your tracings overlap — in fact, we highly recommend it!

Keep going until you've completely covered your page(s)

[Journal pages by Alisa Burke]

Step 4 of 12

Okay, now that you are properly warmed up, we have collected

some ideas for you to try. Skip around or skip over as you wish, and of course, add your own ideas.

To get in the habit of keeping an art journal, try to do at least one exercise every day — even if you only spend 5 minutes on it. It helps if you pick a daily art journaling time, like first thing in the morning or 4pm every afternoon.

Ready for Art Journal Exercise #2?

We'll let cartoonist Jonathan Hill tell you all about it.

<https://www.cmfl.okyou.org/wp-content/uploads/jhill-v2.mp4>

SOME NOTES:

THESE EXERCISES WERE TAKEN FROM THE SKETCHBOOK INTENSIVE CLASS I TAUGHT AT OCAC FOR PRE-COLLEGE & CONTINUING ED. THEY AREN'T AS NEARLY DETAILED OR AS COMPLETE AS THEY SHOULD BE, BUT HOPEFULLY THEY CAN GET YOU STARTED.

MANY OF THE EXERCISES WERE EITHER TAUGHT TO ME OR LIFTED FROM OTHER BOOKS LIKE SYLLABUS BY LINDA BARRY AND DRAWING IS MAGIC BY JOHN HENDRICK.

I MOSTLY TEACH MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, AND AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL AT AN ART SCHOOL, BUT I CAN'T EXPRESS ENOUGH THE VALUE OF DRAWING TO EVERYONE. IT'S A GREAT TOOL TO HELP YOURSELF HAVE AN OUTPUT, TO CENTER YOURSELF, AND TO RELIEVE STRESS AND ANXIETY. THESE EXERCISES ARE FOR EVERYONE!

CREATE MORE!

FEAR LESS!

XOXO
JONATHAN

@ONEOFTHEJOHNS



NO SERIOUSLY, GO TO:
CREATEMOREFEARLESS.ORG
FOR MORE FREE PROJECTS & RESOURCES

Step 5 of 12

Jonathan had so many other ideas to share that he made this comic for you.

In it you'll find all kinds of creative exercises to try — and some you might want to try again and again. Artists often experiment with different approaches to the same exercise. It's all part of stretching your creative muscles.



Step 6 of 12

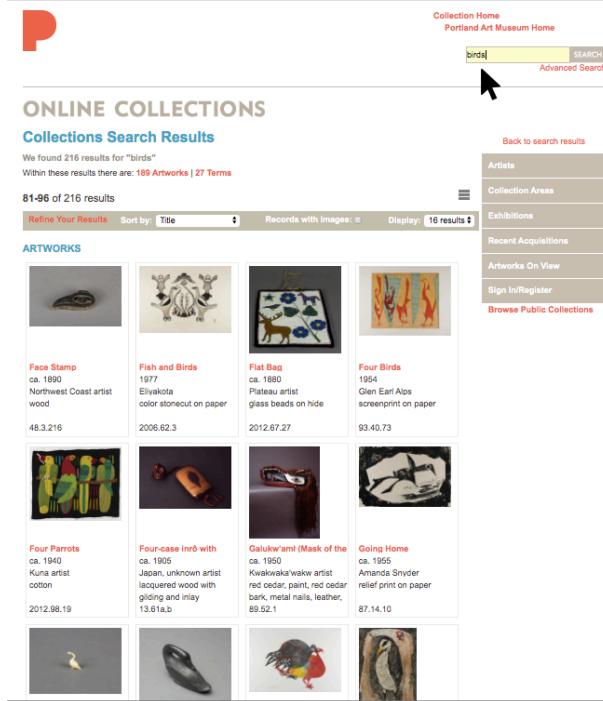
Next up, a field trip to the Portland Art Museum!

Art Journal Exercise #3: Snoop out some art you love and capture it in your journal

Step 7 of 12

First, [click here](#) to magically travel over to the Portland Art Museum. (Your screen should look like the photo below)

See the menu at the top? Great. Click on “Collections.” This will give you some options to choose from. Select the one that says “Search the Collection.”



The screenshot shows the 'Collection Home' and 'Portland Art Museum Home' buttons at the top. A search bar contains the word 'birds' with a 'SEARCH' button. Below the search bar, a red cursor points to the 'Advanced Search' link. The main section is titled 'ONLINE COLLECTIONS' and 'Collections Search Results'. It states 'We found 216 results for "birds"' and 'Within these results there are: 189 Artworks | 27 Terms'. A sidebar on the right lists 'Artists', 'Collection Areas', 'Exhibitions', 'Recent Acquisitions', 'Artworks On View', 'Sign In/Register', and 'Browse Public Collections'. The main content area is titled 'ARTWORKS' and shows a grid of 16 results. Each result includes a thumbnail image, the title, date, artist, and a brief description. For example, the first result is 'Face Stamp' (ca. 1890) by a Northwest Coast artist, wood, with the ID 48.3.216. The last result shown is 'Going Home' (ca. 1955) by Amanda Snyder, relief print on paper, with the ID 87.14.10.

ARTWORKS			
Face Stamp ca. 1890 Northwest Coast artist wood 48.3.216	Fish and Birds 1977 Elivakota color stonewall on paper 2006.62.3	Flat Bag ca. 1880 Plateau artist glass beads on hide 2012.67.27	Four Birds 1954 Glen Earl Alps screenprint on paper 93.40.73
Four Parrots ca. 1940 Kuna artist cotton 2012.98.19	Four-case Inro with ca. 1905 Japan, unknown artist lacquered wood with gilding and inlay 13.61a,b	Galukw'ami (Mask of the ca. 1950 Kwakwaka'wakw artist red cedar, paint, red cedar bark, metal nails, leather. 89.52.1	Going Home ca. 1955 Amanda Snyder relief print on paper 87.14.10

Step 8 of 12

Does your screen look like something like the photos below? If not, [click here](#) and we'll transport you there.

Now, do you see the menu on the right that has the word “Artists” at the top? You can use that menu to wander around the museum, or you can use the search bar to search for whatever interests you.

For example, try typing into the search bar “Bird” or “Shoe.”

Keep exploring the museum until you find a piece of art you really love. You don’t have to know why you love it — art is mysterious that way. Sometimes it speaks straight to our hearts.



ONLINE COLLECTIONS

Four Parrots



Kuna artist, *Four Parrots*, ca. 1940, cotton, Gift of Barbara Christy Wagner, no known copyright restrictions, 2012.98.19



This work is not currently on view.

[Back to search results](#)

Artists
Collection Areas
Exhibitions
Recent Acquisitions
Artworks On View
Sign In/Register
Browse Public Collections



MY COLLECTIONS

Details

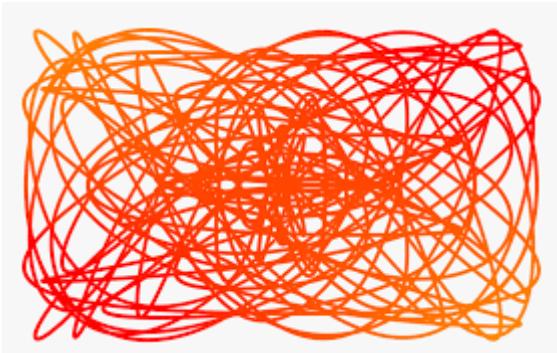
Title	Four Parrots
Artist	Kuna artist (Kuna)
Date	ca. 1940
Medium	cotton
Dimensions (H x W x D)	12 in x 15 3/8 in
Collection Area	Native American Art
Category	Central America Clothing and Textiles
Object Type	mola
Cultural Group	Kuna
Credit Line	Gift of Barbara Christy Wagner
Accession Number	2012.98.19
Copyright	no known copyright restrictions
Terms	bird birds cotton Kuna molas

Step 9 of 12

When you find that special piece of art, click on it so you can take a closer look and learn a little more about it. What do you appreciate about it? What does it make you feel?

After you've spent some time getting to know this wonderful work of art, open up your art journal and see if you can capture it — in a drawing or words or however you wish.

You can try to recreate the artwork if you want, or you can just use the style or shape or subject or color as inspiration for creating your own work of art.



Step 10 of 12

How about just one more exercise before we send you on your merry way?

Art Journal Exercise #4: Draw your favorite song

Yes, it is possible to draw music. Just listen to your favorite song (or pick out a new favorite on Songify or app of your choice) and while you listen, notice the rhythm and flow of the notes. It's a good idea to listen to the song once with your eyes closed so you can see the sounds in your mind.

What colors came to mind? What lines or shapes or images did you see?

Play the song again and, working with colors that capture the mood of your song, let your pens dance around the page — or imagine that your pen is an instrument playing along with the song. If you want to really get into the feeling, try moving your pen around your page with your eyes closed.

Step 11 of 12

As for **Art Journal Exercise #5 to Infinity**, you can find endless ideas around your house, out on a walk, inside your head, or by searching around the internet ([Pinterest](#) is a good place to begin, and [artjournalist.com](#) is one of many websites where you can find all kinds of creative prompts to keep your daily art journaling practice going).

Step 12 of 12

Want to share some of your journal pages in our gallery? We would love to see them!