
Art Journaling: Mixed Media on Paper with Mou Saha

Chapter 1 - Mixed Media on Paper

Overview

- My name is Mou Saha. I'm a mixed media artist. I'm also the Creative Bug contest winner. And I love art journaling. For me, art journaling is a very personal creative experience. It is a very safe playground where I can try out new techniques and experiment. I'm gonna show you some art journal pages from scratch. How to create interesting backgrounds with dyes. How to add texture with recycled materials. And how to draw from life. So come join me as we go on this art journaling adventure together.

Materials

- Today I'll be working with watercolor paper. This is 140 pound cold press watercolor paper you could cut it down to any size you like. And I'll be creating interesting backgrounds using the tea stain dye. These are tea bags that are infused with dyes. So they release with hot water for which you are gonna need some bowls and a pair of gloves then there are watercolor pencils, some paintbrushes, a water cup and for attaching our texture items we can use a stapler or a sewing machine. I'm also going to show you how to use some everyday materials such as used dryer sheets, paper towel, baby wipes and we are gonna add some journaling with alphabet stamps and permanent ink. We are gonna use our scissors and I'm gonna draw using pencil and my paint pens. And also make some marks with the colored paint pens. And for drawing from life I have collected a few items from my studio. You don't have to look far for them, anything will do.

Creating backgrounds with dye

- I'm going to create some interesting backgrounds with the tea stain dyes. I have some of the dyes started here. They come in teabags, and they are infused with dyes. You just have to add hot water, and let it steep, just like tea. (water gurgles) Here are some of the pages I have dyed before. As you can see, these are the six different colors I have. The tea stain dyes are designed for 100% cotton fabric, but I have found them to work really well on any porous surface. So now I am wearing my gloves, and I am going to dip my papers in the various dye colors. The more you do it, the more you will figure out which color palette you like the best. This was orange. Now I'm going into a pink. It's a good idea not to mix the pink and the green together, because they tend to make brown. Now I'm going into red. And now I'm going to go into this blue. And it's okay if you get marks on the rest of your paper. And now I'm going to set it out to dry. Let's do a green. Let's take it out to a blue. And to a darker blue. Don't be afraid to experiment with your color palette. You never know what you are going to discover when you experiment. This time I'm just going to fold my paper in half, and dip in the red. So I have folded this in half, and I'm now going to let that color run into the channel that the fold created. We'll go into the orange. All right. Set that to dry. I'm going to fold this in half. In half again. This is going into green, and then into blue. And I'm not going to open the fold this time, I'm just going to let it sit like this. And let's do a pink. I'm going to let it drip down. I'll come in, into the dark blue, and let that drip down. You just have to play with your paper and dyes. And I'm going to set that to dry. Keep experimenting with your color palettes, and before you put your dyes away, I like to use baby wipes, and household items like paper towels, used dryer sheets, to dye them, and to later use them for adding texture to my pages. So now I'm going to dip this one in the

dye, and just let it dry. We'll squeeze out some of the dye, and just let it sit. This is a dryer sheet. This is a paper towel. The colors, they stay pretty much the same. They do not dry lighter. Let's do a few other colors with that. This is the orange. Usually I don't mix the colors when I am doing the paper towels or items like that. When they are dry, I like to cut them up and make little embellishments for my pages. I even save these baby wipes for later use. You can save these dyes for a few days in an airtight mason jar. But not more than two to three days.

Observational drawing and mark-making

- Now my papers are dry. As you can see, you can draw on both sides. Both sides turned out pretty. Just choose a side and draw on that. I'm gonna start with this one. I'm gonna draw this vase over here. When I look at an object and try to draw it, I tend to simplify the lines a bit. I'm not going for a photo realistic look. I just want the lines. So I'm gonna first draw with my pencil. I'm just drawing the leaves right now. And just going for a cluster of leaves. I can always fix anything that I don't like when I go over this with my pen. For now, I'm just trying to get an outline and an overall feel of the object. So now, my pencil drawing is done. I am going to use the pen next. This is a PITT artist pen, it's black. It's a medium tip. I like this pen because it's India ink and it dries almost immediately and I can add more wet layers on top. I don't always follow my pencil lines exactly. I make corrections as I go and sometimes I add things that are not even there. I'll keep adding the pen lines. I refer back to the object every now and then to maintain a likeness, but that's mainly for reference. I'm not gonna do every leaf exactly. Now I'm gonna do the vase. Again, it doesn't have to be exact, just an impression. Now that my pen work is done, I am going to erase the pencil lines with my eraser and then add some color with the watercolor pencils. Okay. I'm going to color the tips of these leaves a little red and fill in some of the leaves green and leave some of them white or whatever color they are. Let's take a different red, just for variety. Going back in with some green. I'm also gonna get some blue-green, just for variation. I'm just trying to add a little color variation because they're not gonna stay in that area once I start adding water. And now, I'm gonna blend the colors with some water. Again, I'm not gonna go over the whole leaf and try to make it, try to fill it all in. It's just patches here and there. I'm not trying to make it look exactly like my object here. But close enough. Only if I feel like it needs a little more color, I can always go back in, add some more. I'm happy with my leaves. I'm not gonna add any more colors to them. Now I'm gonna move to the journaling part, using the stamps and the ink. Make sure to use a permanent ink, because we are gonna add more wet layers later. I'm gonna spell out my word, resilient, using alphabet stamps. I'm not particularly fond of straight-line stamping, so I'm not gonna worry about that. I'm just gonna try to get them in a row. Stamping is done. I have used only one word, but you can add as much text as you like. My next step would be to add some marks with these pens. These are also PITT pens, but they come in different colors. I'm just going to add marks around my main drawing. These marks, they are just really simple. They just tend to add a lot of visual texture, when used together. I'm switching colors. Adding marks like this very easily adds a lot of interest to any page. I'm not gonna cover the whole page, but just kind of an outline around the object. I think this looks great. Feel free to experiment with your own pens and mark making.

Other examples of mixed media

- When I first started drawing, I did not feel very confident but I kept drawing everyday and now I don't feel so terrible about it anymore. For this page, I'm gonna draw this crane scissors. They're really cute and I bought them just so I can draw them. It will look complex but if I break it down, in

lines, simple lines, it's not that difficult. So I'm gonna start at the tip. And... Just keep following the line and it doesn't have to be perfect. Just doing the legs which come down and become the handles. Again, if you feel that the lines are not going the way you want them to go, use your eraser and... You will get it right, eventually. This little part is the hinge that holds it together, it also doubles as the crane's eye. And... Here's the wing, I'm not gonna try to copy it exactly. I'm gonna finish those handles. Trace your lines with the big pens. Before you can add your journaling, you need to erase your pencil lines, (rubs paper) (cover clicks) Now I'm gonna stamp the word, beauty. It's beauty and utility because this embroidery scissors, they're in the shape of a little crane and I think that's what beauty means. So this time, I'm following the line of my drawing to stamp my word. Again, not really particular about everything being in one straight line. Sometimes, it's a lot more fun to add your word, following a different path than just a straight line. I'm gonna show you one more grouping of object that I'm gonna draw. The reason I chose this spools is because of the difference in their size and a little bit in their shape. So let's draw that. I'm starting with the big spool, just a little plastic part on top and the smallest spool is in front of the bigger spool and it has a slightly different shape. It's more of a cylinder than a cone. The most fun part about drawing a spool of thread is how the threads wrap around the spool. And now you know the next step, you add your pen lines. And the little spool in front, which is why I left this part. I did not come all the way down because I wanted to place that spool in front. And now I'm gonna do the thread lines. (rubs) I don't think I'm gonna add any color to my drawing on this page. I am just gonna go to stamping. (cover clicks) I'm stamping the word big and small. (cover clicks) And I'm gonna take my pen and just frame the word small by drawing, just four, straight lines around it. Just box it in. The fun part of working on this loose sheets is that you can take them anywhere with you. You can keep practicing your drawing, turn them around in all different directions. You can stitch on them with no difficulty and add texture. Remember, if you do not like how a drawing turned out, you can always cut this page up and use it on another project.

Adding collage and other embellishments

- This is the most fun part for me for these art journaling pages. I'm gonna add texture to these drawings with all the fun things that we dyed earlier. I'm gonna add some texture to my leaves using some dyed paper towels. I'm just tracing leaf shapes here using some baby wipes and also some dryer sheets. Just a rough idea of a leaf shape. I'm gonna cut it out. And this is the baby wipe. Even though this is red I'm still gonna cut it out as part of my texture for the leaves. I just freehand cut these shapes. They do not have to be exact, but together they are gonna make beautiful texture. I'm gonna sew it with the sewing machine in my next step. You could also use stapler, but let's figure out what I'm gonna do with the next pages. So, we did leaves here, let's do a flower for this one. I'm just drawing a rough circle. I'm gonna cut a few more circles and layer them together to make a flower. This is a paper towel. You can see how some of the colors got mixed together when I had left them to dry. And that's a great thing. So, after they dried the dyes did not dull down at all, they're very intense. I wanna see more of that pink, so I'm gonna cut this circle a little smaller. Now I'm gonna work on the spools page. Let's see what I wanna add here for texture. These are some seam bindings that I dyed, and let me see what works best here. Maybe if I just kinda scrunch them up and make it into a border. I think that's what I'm gonna do. I'm not gonna cut the seam binding, I am just gonna scrunch it up, stitch it in place, and cut off anything that's excess. For that I'm gonna use my home sewing machine with whatever colored thread is in there. And let's do some sewing. For the leaves I am just gonna take one leaf at a time. I'm gonna add the next leaf, put the foot

down. A good thing to remember here is to keep the speed at the lowest. I'm gonna turn it, come back up, add more. And this is super simple stitching. It's just going back and forth straight. And at this point I am going to pull this out and cut off any excess threads. I'm gonna stitch my flower just the same way, back and forth. I just pivot the page back and forth to finish the sewing. And that's done. For the spools I am going to go and make a border with the seam binding. I'm just gonna ruffle the seam binding a little. I have to take this slow. And be careful with your fingers, don't sew your fingers in place. And there it is. Now I know where to trim off my ribbon. Now that the stitched elements are all in place, I'm gonna see what other marks I wanna make on these pages to finish them. I'm taking the pen and just going on one side of the vase, just dots. Sort of acts like a little bit of shadow. Maybe I wanna frame the word resilient. So, that is that. And now I'm gonna come to this page, and add some details to the flower. And just little circles for the center of the flower. Then I'm gonna come out to the next layer, add some lines. For the very last layer, the outermost, I'm gonna keep making the same mark, the lines, but with a different color. And as you can see, because I'm working on a loose sheet of paper, I can turn my page as I like. I'm gonna add a few more marks because the page still looks a bit empty to me. I'm gonna take my pen and add some marks. The marks don't have to be anything complex, just simple dots, dashes, and stuff like that. And let's also doodle some. Again, very simple scallops. Staying in the same range of colors, but switching them around. Maybe a few over here. There's really no set rules for this. Anything that you like to fill up your page. I'm gonna continue the scallops right here. One last one. And there, I think that's enough. Now, I have the spool page, so, let's see. I'm not gonna add too many marks on this one because this is pretty full already. Just a few marks here and there to keep it interesting. I think that is it. There are some other pages that I did the exact same way that I wanna share with you today. Here's one. I did this flower the exact same way that I did this one, and there's more journaling here, also stamped. So, I wrote, "I don't even drink coffee, "but couldn't resist this French press still life study. "I justified practical reasoning "can be so overrated." And then there was this clothespin one that I did, and this is the scalloped border that I stitched. And here's one where I just used the dye as ink and drew some. And here's one where I sketched a flower and made the vase out of a piece of dyed drier sheet. And for this last one I added the marks in the same way. I used the alphabet stamps and I framed some of the words. I love working on these single sheets of paper because you saw how easy it was for me to turn them around. They're really flexible, and keep experimenting with your color palette and don't stop drawing. And one more thing, don't throw anything away. Just dye them, cut them up, use them as embellishments.