

All about trading

ATCs, Altered Art, Art Journals, Chunky Books & Creative Inspiration



ATC by Joel Armstrong

In this issue...

FEATURE: An Interview with
Joel Armstrong, Artist & Illustrator

- Making Glass ATCs
- Accordion Pocketbooks
- Art Card Galleries
- Walk-throughs on Oil Pastels
& Mixed Media Flowers
- Illustration: Every Picture
Tells a Story

Spring Issue Competition

What does "Mail Art" mean to you?



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Annie Melion is currently a full time student, planning on eventually earning a Master's in Library Science. She loves all types of art, but is fond of the Surreal and Symbolist movements. Her favorite artists are Michael Parkes, Daniel Merriam, Aubrey Beardsley and her buddies at IllustratedATCs.com where she is a Moderator. She mainly works in watercolor, colored pencil, acrylics, markers and gel pens, though not all at once. She lives in NY (cow country, not the city) and has difficulty writing biographies in the third person.

- artpfunkcentral.blogspot.com
- www.flickr.com/photos/littleboots

Dana Driscoll is an experimental artist working in a variety of media including watercolors, mixed media, oils, clay, book arts, hand papermaking, and altered art. She is currently working on several artistic projects, including painting her way through a 78-card tree tarot deck and combining her love of pottery and bookmaking. When not avoiding the perils of pursuing her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition, she can be found frolicking in nearby forests or hanging out with her nerdy gamer friends. Dana's work can be found at her blog: artisticjourneys.blogspot.com and she can be reached at adriayna@yahoo.com.

- www.artisticjourneys.etsy.com

Brittany Noethen is an artist living in a tech manager's body. She would rather be decapitated than give up making art, trading ATCs, or stop thinking that the phrase "Muffins or Bust" is hilarious. She currently lives in Iowa with her partner Cat, her 12 year old pit bull, Maggie, and shelves full of art supplies.

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Angela Kingston-Smith is more widely recognised as “LemurKat” and considers herself an illustrator, not an artist. With her quirky, whimsical style she has the tendency to turn anything cute and her art now graces the walls of fellow artists all over the world. She hails from the lovely south island of New Zealand, a place now known everywhere, thanks to a rather popular trilogy of movies. Proud of her country, Kat loves to add a “kiwi flavour” to her art. For more information on LemurKat or to see more of her art, pay a visit to her online gallery at Deviantart.

- lemurkat.deviantart.com

Anne el-Habre has been making art for nearly 40 years, on any blank, flat surface that happens to come within view. Doors, walls, desks, lockers, trash cans, napkins, as well as the usual artist's variety of paper, canvas, and wood – no surface is safe. Since discovering ATCs (artists trading cards), she has found that it opens up a whole other realm of possibilities and has been experimenting with collage, powdered pigments, ink, and pushing the boundaries of her creativity. Anne owns and operates her own gallery in Savannah, Georgia with fellow IATC member, Judith Metzger, and is an avid gamer and pirate enthusiast. Anne's work can be seen at:

- www.alvidaart.com
- www.annee.etsy.com
- www.flickr.com/photos/anonevyl

Meran niCuill Fascinated by nature and science, Meran ni Cuill attempts daily to translate her passions into art. Sometimes she feels she even succeeds! And then something else will catch her attention and off she'll go! Chasing another ideal. Meran enjoys gardening, sunsets, dogs, birds, and just about anything as long as it's not endless crowds of people. When those present, she'll retreat to a quiet place and read a book, or cut some glass, both of which she finds therapeutic.

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AbiAldrich is an K-6 Art teacher in Wyoming. She sells oil paintings professionally, makes pottery because she likes to play in the mud, and generally makes text based sculptures and installations because that is her true love. Beyond that she loves printmaking, drawing, and graphic design. In all her massive amounts of free time Abi hangs out with her menagerie, including several rabbits, a chinchilla and a large bearded dragon. She also calls West Africa every night to talk to the love of her life Gee. So in a nutshell she is a nut who likes to make a mess in art!

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Letter from the Editor



Hello everyone,

Spring is a time of new beginnings. A time when we put the cold, dark winter months behind us and look upon fresh horizons and new opportunities and ideas. The last few months have been a major transition for myself as both an artist and as a community member, although looking back, many of the changes that have happened have been for the best.

Spring is a time for you to try something new—an new artistic technique, a new theme, or a new type of art. Our issue this month is jam-packed with new techniques and media for you to try. For inspiration, consider Meran ni Cuill's discussion of glass ATCs (page 20) or Joanna Crawshaw Miller's helpful tips about bookbinding (page 6).

Spring is also a time for new beginnings and new friends. I encourage everyone to join us in developing our new ATC community at ATCsforall.com. More information on this new community can be found on page 11. It is a welcoming community open to all medias and artists worldwide.

Thank you to everyone who made this issue possible—our writers, editors, and layout staff. Thank you also to our readers who are returning for our second issue!

Dana Driscoll, Editor-in-Chief

Letter to the Editor

Hello Dana,

I am brand-new to ATCs and don't even know where to begin outside of a search on the Internet for more info. I came across your 'zine as a result of following one of the search results. Great info! I like the format too.

Now I want to know how to participate in exchanges - in person or via mail (which is most convenient for me, with a 3 year old in tow). An article on how to get started in the world of ATCs would be most helpful to me. In the meantime, any suggestions?

Thank you for your time.

Dari
www.daristolzoff.com

Dana's Answer

Hi Dari,

Welcome to the wonderful world of ATCs. You are in luck! We've written an article in this issue (page 10) specifically for new traders like you where you can learn the basics of ATC trading, a short history of ATCs on the web, and common terminology used in ATC communities.

The world of ATCs is a fantastic one full of creativity, growth, and community. I am excited for you as you start on this journey.

-Dana

Bookbinding and other projects with the artist in mind

by Joanna Crawshaw Miller



Bookbinding projects are a great way to explore your artistic side while making a functional and useful creation. This article provides two examples of bookbinding and bookmaking techniques for you to try—accordion books and pocket books. Books created can be used to display ATCs, write important information down, or give as beautiful gifts.

Accordion Books: One of the simplest forms of books, the accordion needs no stitching and can be used in a wide variety of ways. With a bit of inspiration and creativity, you can dress up this simple book so it really pops! This book makes a great gift.



Accordion Book

Follow these simple steps to create an ATC-sized accordion book. If you use thin paper, the book will still be thin enough to fit in an ATC sleeve.

Materials:

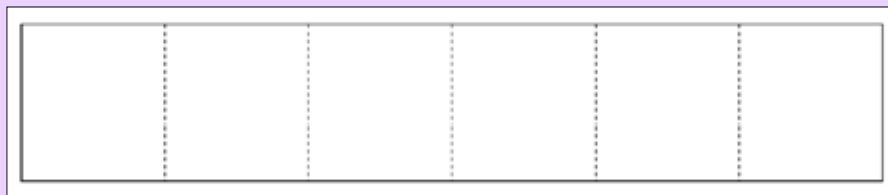
Paper sized 3.5" by 15" (this will make six pages)
Heavy paper sized 2.5"x3.5", 2 pieces
Bone folder or strong thumb nail
Glue

Instructions:

Measure and cut paper to size
Measure 2.5" from the end and fold, using the bone folder to create a crisp, flat edge
Fold paper on itself, fan-style, be sure to match the edges up precisely
Glue heavy paper to first and last page to create book cover

If you want to create a two-sided book (as in example 1), simply cut long pieces of paper and fold together. Glue the entire back to the front or just glue the cover pages together. For an interesting , use bright colors and cut one side slightly smaller than the other so you will see both colors on one side. (fig. 1)

Figure 1



Variation – Pocket Book

Altering the simple accordion just a bit, you can create a pocket book to display ATCs. This book is a little trickier; you may want to practice on low cost paper before you cut your fancy paper.



Materials:

- Paper sized 8"x18.5" (this will make six pages)
- Heavy paper sized 3"x4", 2 pieces
- Bone folder or strong thumb nail
- Glue

Instructions:

1. Measure and cut paper to size
2. Fold paper in half the long way so it measures 4"x18.5"
3. Measure 3" from the end and fold, using the bone folder to create a crisp, flat edge
4. Fold paper on itself, fan style, be sure to match the edges up precisely
5. Open up paper; on the bottom half make three cuts and fold on diagonals
6. Fold on center and glue cover pages together (if paper is not very heavy, add a tiny bit of glue to inner fold at the top of triangles (fig. 2)
7. Glue heavy paper to first and last page to create book cover



Figure 2

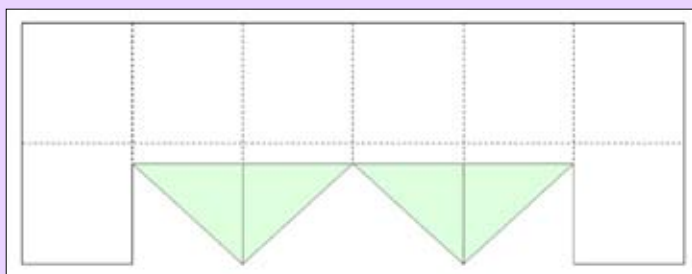
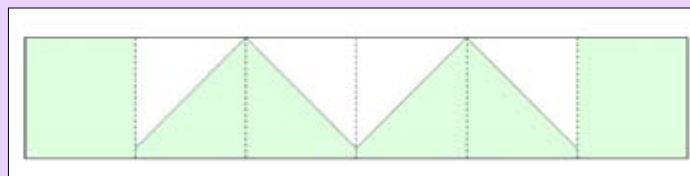


Figure 3



Mixed Media Iris Demonstration

By WhiteMoth

Many artists have a hard time mixing medias without ending up with a card they'd rather just throw away. This article shows you how to use India ink and watercolor together successfully through a mixed media iris demonstration. I encourage you to try this technique with any subject matter.

Before you begin:

The first thing you might want to do is to choose an image for reference. I chose an iris as an example for this Artist Trading Card (ATC). You will be following the rough outline of the subject.

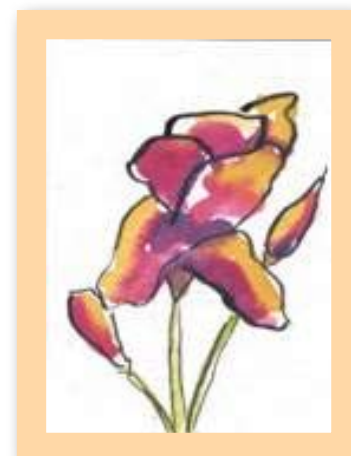
Be sure you moisten your watercolors before you begin.

Steps for using this technique:

- 1) Dip a narrow paintbrush into your ink well. Gently wipe off excess ink by dragging your paintbrush towards you across a paper towel.
- 2) Lightly outline the image onto your watercolor paper with your paintbrush. If this is uncomfortable for you, then draw your subject lightly in pencil first.
- 3) Add watercolor to your image. I used three colors for the petals and one for the stem, with darker colors near the folds and base of the petals.

Materials needed

- Watercolor paper
- India ink
- Watercolors
- Paint pen or acrylic paints
- 4 or 5 Thin sable or synthetic paintbrushes
- Small spray bottle
- Paper towels



4) While it's still damp, use your small spray bottle to gently spritz your card one or two times.

You may want to give it one more spray if you don't think the ink and watercolor spread far enough.

If there is a lot of water and paint, lift it from your card ("lifting" is literally taking a paper towel and lifting or removing watercolor. If you have not used this technique before, I suggest you practice it until you're comfortable).

5) Let it come close to drying, then reapply watercolor and ink until the desired amount of color is achieved. The ink will spread much further on a wet surface, so do this carefully. I added watercolor five more times, lifting then reapplying. Always be careful with this technique; you can easily overwork your piece.

6) Using your thinnest brush, apply a few dabs of color on the petals to give it a little punch.

7) Apply semi-dry acrylic paint on a brush as highlights or you can use a white paint pen as I did.

If you use a paint pen, be sure the card is dry; apply and smudge it with your fingertip or a dry paint brush.

You can also add another touch of paint where it may be needed when the paint dries.

I added a little more green to the stems and went over a few high-lighted spots at the very end.



Mixed Media Iris

ARTIST TRADING CARDS (ATCS): AN INTRODUCTION

By Dana Driscoll and Judithann Illingworth



"Zetti Art: Mon Ami" by Judithann Illingworth
Media: Basic gray vagabond paper, buttons, family photo, collage elements.

ATCS: AN UNOFFICIAL HISTORY

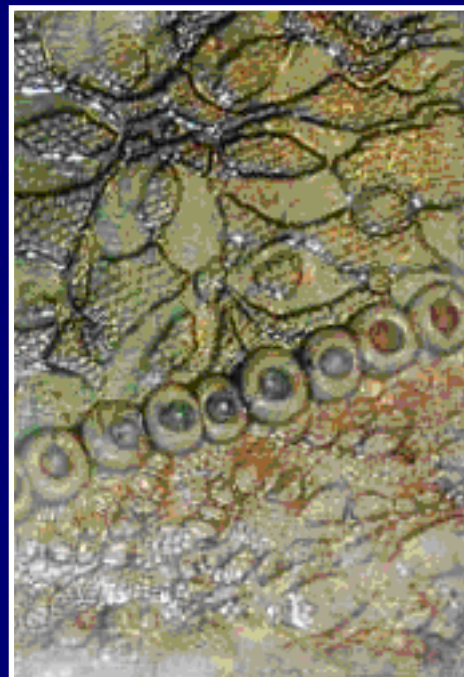
A Swiss performing artist, M. Vänçi Stirnemann, was admiring a collection of hockey trading cards and was inspired to develop the concept of "A Collaborative Cultural Performance" in 1996. He then created over 1000 Artist Trading Cards, displayed them in his Zurich book store and on the last day encouraged anyone who wanted one to create their own ATCs to trade. The criteria was that they had to be 2.5 x 3.5 inches in size, any medium, and were not to ever be sold, just traded.

This new art form would have remained a local attraction had it not been for the Internet where word of them spread worldwide. These days they are just a click away via your computer keyboard. Internet sites allow individuals all over the world trade ATCs through the mail or organize live trading events.

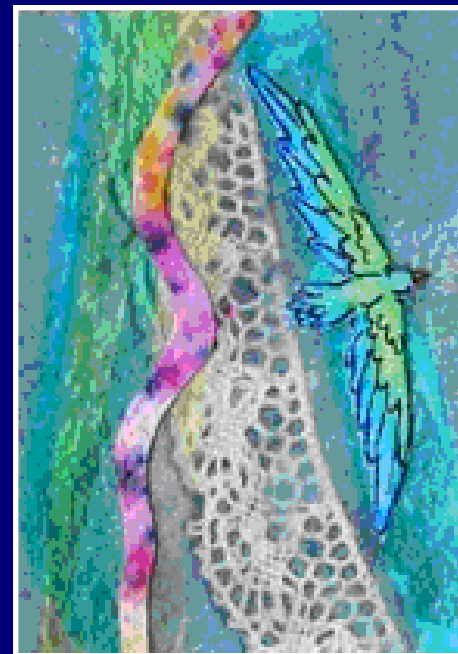
Today, Artist Trading Cards are created by aficionados worldwide. ATC artists range from beginners to professional and work in every imaginable media—acrylic, watercolor, oils, mixed media, collage, stamping/scrapping, fabric, clay, and more! Once ATCs are created, they are traded in-person or online either one-on-one or in swaps.

HOW TO TRADE

Trading ATCs takes several basic forms—the one-on-one trade and the swap. One-on-one trading is a trade between two individuals, where each artist agrees to trading terms and then exchanges cards via the postal system. Terms of the trade can vary widely. Some artists prefer to post cards they have created and trade them for other cards they are able to pick out from an available gallery. Other artists prefer "blind" trades, or trades when you each agree to send a card, but do not see the card in advance. Finally, other traders like to work in "themed" trades; each trader in a themed trade specifies a theme that he or she is collecting and each makes a card based in that theme. So if Jennifer and Briel wanted to set up a themed trade, Jennifer would ask Briel to make her two cards based on a tree theme and Briel would respond asking for two cards with hearts and/or fish. Media may also be specified in a themed trade.



"Beyond Flight" by Dana Driscoll
Media: Handmade paper with embedded lace, handmade paper with cold water dye, tissue paper, watercolors and ink.



"Ceramic ATC #8" By Dana Lynn Driscoll
Media: B-Mix white porcelain clay with lace imprints, oxides, clear glaze.



*"Milkweeds" By Judithann Illingworth
Media: Watercolors*

PLACES TO TRADE

There are many communities to trade online. Here are a few of our favorites:

www.atcsforall.com

A new ATC and mail art trading community dedicated to creating a welcoming and open atmosphere for all traders. Anyone and everyone is welcome to join in on the swaps, post cards to the gallery, and get to know ATC artists from around the world.

www.illustratedatcs.com

A juried site for advanced ATC artists, Illustrated ATCs is a place for professionals and hobbyists to trade, swap, and talk about ATCs.

www.flickr.com

Quite a few flickr groups exist for ATC trading and swapping. Flickr's cool gallery features make it easy to quickly post card images and arrange trades.

Swaps are organized group trades, often on a theme or with a media specified. In a swap, one person serves as the "host" and all participants make and mail cards to the host. The host swaps the cards, sending each participant back their "returns"-cards from different participants. I have personally hosted swaps with many themes, including: collage houses, realistic trees, mixed media layers, cities, abstract, painted landscapes, handmade paper, four seasons, crows, and much more!

Round robins and jams are another type of group swap, only these cards are usually collaboratively made by multiple artists. So one artist might start four jam cards, and then do colorful backgrounds on the cards. This artist would send the cards on to a second artist, who would add some foreground elements, and on to a third, and so forth. Usually 3-4 artists participate in a jam or round robin card, and the last artist makes copies and/or sends one of the original cards to each member in the group.

ARTIST TRADING CARD TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

- **1-1, 2-2, 3-3:** This represents the amount of cards traded. For example, a 3-3 trade is a trade where each artist sends three ATCs to their trading partner.
- **ACEO:** Artist Cards Editions and Originals, another name for ATCs. Usually these are created to be sold.
- **ATC:** Artist Trading Card
- **ATC Blanks:** Blank paper (cardstock, watercolor paper, etc) cut into 2.5 x 3.5" sizes.
- **Blind Trade:** A blind trade is one in which neither trading partner sees the cards that will be traded, but are instead surprised with what they get!
- **Host:** A person who hosts an ATC swap.
- **Jams and Round Robins:** Collaboratively created ATCs where multiple artists (three or four usually) each contribute to the art. Jam cards are single cards that are worked on by each artist and then copies are made and distributed to each artist who worked on them. Round robins are sets of cards that are worked on and then each artist receives a completed card.
- **Pick-a-Theme Swap:** A Pick-a-Theme swap is a small-group swap where each member chooses his or her own theme and each player in the group makes one card per person based on the theme. So if Jen, Erin, and Jaisree are in a Pick-a-Theme swap group, Jen makes cards for Erin and Jaisree based on each of their themes, and so forth.
- **Player:** A person who participates in a swap.
- **Returns:** Cards you receive back from an ATC swap.
- **Swap:** An ATC swap is a themed trade where you send a certain number of cards based on a theme to a host. The host then sorts and redistributes the cards back to each of the players.

Live Trading sessions

By Anne el-Habre



In the first installment, I discussed how to get started organizing a live swap. For this next installment I will give you ideas to “talk up” Artists Trading Cards) (ATCs) in order to enhance and diversify your membership roster.

The trading of ATCs can mean many things to many people. Some look at live swaps as a reason to get out of the house. Others enjoy meeting people who have an affinity for art and who like to create. Still others find the camaraderie conducive to their creative process. Whatever reasons people have, they are all valid and worth sharing with the unenlightened.

Many people active in the ATC community do not pursue art as a fulltime career and therefore do not have such a vested interest in making a living with it. By and large, it isn't difficult to get these folks to try something new and different. But to get some “established” artists in the mix might prove more challenging, so when approaching them to join in your ATC group, here are some things you might want to consider.

1. Make sure you have some information with you that they can take home. A link to some informative websites that are geared to their interests, websites with really nice examples of traded cards, or simply a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) might be applicable. Shameless plug alert: a link to the Art Trader Magazine might also be a good plan.
2. Go to art festivals, flea markets, gallery events, or any place artists hang out. If you have a kid in school, invite his/her art teacher. If possible, scope out the artists in advance; get a feel for their personalities. Avoid muscling in on their time if they are with a potential client or customer.
3. Don't be offended if they don't give you the time of day or if they look at you as though you offered them a plate of slugs. Be pleasant – don't burn bridges. They may realize somewhere down the line that ATCs are a great concept and join your group at a later time.
4. If you can't interest them to become a member, invite them to come as a guest speaker. They could share little tips on working with certain mediums, how they create, what inspires them – let them talk as long as you get them to come to your group so they can see what they're missing.

Having one or two established and working artists in your group benefits not only the artists who are willing to participate, it also gives other members the opportunity to become better at their craft as well, through interaction and through the sharing of creative ideas. We often look at artists as unapproachable and intangible at times – and while there are those whose egos know no boundaries, most are pleasant and willing to share their craft with anyone who shows an interest.

Download our ATC Flyer for printing
www.arttradermag.com/issues/misc/ATC_Flyer.pdf

Gothic Zetti Swap

Zetti! It's colorful, cheerful, and so fun and light. But what about the dark side of Zetti? What does it look like on a BAD day? The participants of the Gothic Zetti Swap decided to find out by creating cards that have the look of the traditional Zetti style, but incorporate subject matter that will chill the blood...



Anne Melion

*"To tell of disappointment and misery,
to thicken the darkness of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth
of uncertainty, has been always a delicious employment of the poets"*

-Samuel Johnson

Dina Haskins



Sal Scheibe

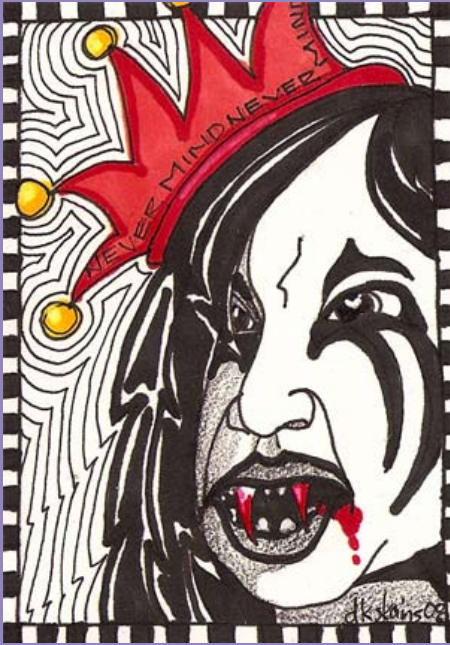


Heather Luedke



What is Gothic Zetti?

Dark, bold colors, morbid themes, crows, skulls, victorian waifs, vampires, alchemists, haunted ghost-eye trees, goth fae, zany tombstones or skeletons. Participants were asked to incorporate text and psychedelic patterns; polka dots, stripes and swirls!



Katie Skains



Joy Saethre



Brittany Noethen

Ang Westerman



Marla Tomlinson



Suzi MacKenzie



iATC's Member Artist Feature

~Joel Armstrong~

Joel Armstrong is a master of many types of media. From wire sculpture and installations, to lush colored pencil illustration and vivid graphic design, his art career has led him down many creative paths. Armstrong, a member of www.illustratedATCs.com, has graciously offered to share his life and work with us.



Annie Melion: How did you become interested in art?

Joel Armstrong: In Jr. High, I had the option of taking violin or painting lessons. Thanks to my parents, I was able to avoid the violin lessons and started painting in 7th grade. I continued to go to painting lessons until my senior year and had my first show during my Sr year.

Why did you decide to become an artist?

Art was what I grew up with, and what I knew best. Before I went to college, I already had my heroes; Wayne Thiebaud and Philip Pearlstein.

Do you have family or pets?

I have been married for 26 years to my beautiful wife Sandy. We have 3 children. The oldest two are Kyle (21) and Kurt (19); both are in the art program where I teach. My daughter, Alyssa (15), is a sophomore in HS.



Did you study art in school?

Yes, my first degree was a BFA in painting from Texas Tech, and my graduate degree (MFA in drawing), which I began at 40, was from Colorado State University.

What sort of Illustration work did you do?

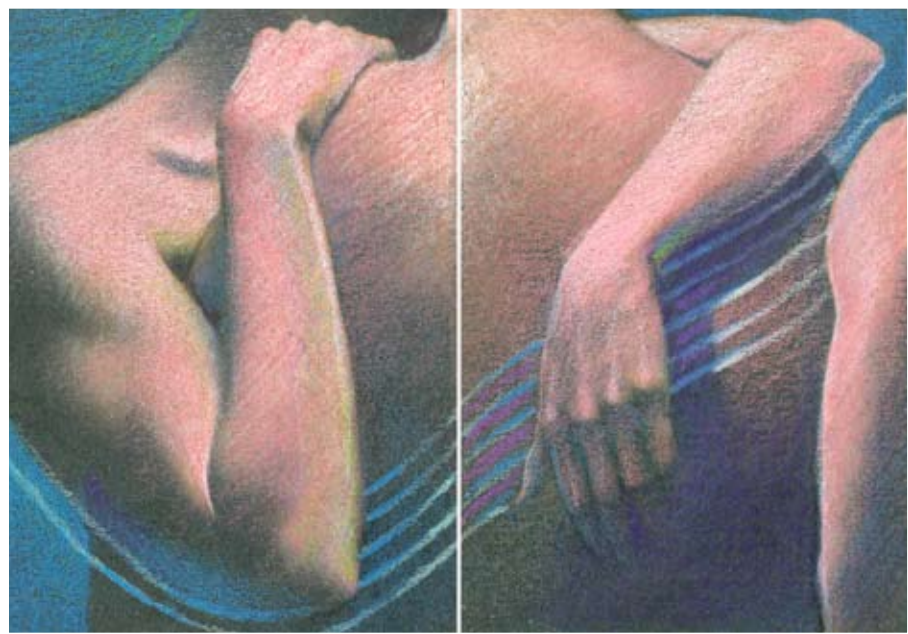
My first illustration—No surprise, was in colored pencil—was a poster for the Dallas Opera. They didn't pay well, but they gave me 1000 copies of the posters that I was able to leave behind at many agencies in the Dallas area. It wasn't long before I was doing soft pencil work for Neiman Marcus and Mary Kay Cosmetics. I continued to work in the Dallas area for over 10 years. When we moved to Colorado, my freelance sort of fell off. I am still doing work for magazines and card companies.

Was working as an illustrator a rewarding experience?

Doing the illustration work was quite rewarding, but I always kept my own work going on the side. The business side was a pain, trying to get paid, doing self-employment taxes, and the lack of health insurance. Didn't matter how busy I was as an illustrator, the money always was quite unpredictable.

Tell us about your experience in graphic design?

JA: My first job out of school was art director for an Oilfield supplier. Not having an education in Graphic Design made things quite difficult, but I was able to airbrush images of all their equipment. I lasted 3 months before I got the Dallas Opera job, and within the next month I was on my own. I served as Art Director for other companies, Texas Instruments for instance, helping them sell missile guidance systems. This ironically led to a job as an Art Director for a magazine for children, "Kids!" After several other agencies, I got experience in advertising, working for Frito Lay, Pizza Hut, KFC, and Marriott Hotel. My last art director job lasted almost 10 years, as art director for another magazine, "Group," that went to youth leaders in churches.



How was it different from being an illustrator?

The great thing about having background as an illustrator, I was much more sympathetic to the plights of making a living. I found illustrators I liked and created long-lasting friendships. If I made sure I could guarantee them a certain amount of work in a year, they always had money coming in. Having health insurance is a big benefit, and by this time I loved design, absorbed everything I could get my hands on and publishing fit my energy level and I could express my own personality into the magazine.

How did you become interested in wire sculpture?

I was in Grad School when I started working with wire. This was back in 1999. By the time I graduated, I had 4 shows that featured the wire. I got started working with wire when challenged by my graduate committee to be more investigative in my work. I already drew well, so I had to choose something unique that I adapted as my own.

How did you become a teacher? (Tell us about your job and what you do)

I started teaching as a graduate assistant. So I was art director for a magazine, taught 2 classes a semester, was trying to work on my graduate work and even had my series of shows to prepare for, two of which opened in different cities on the same weekend. One was wire, and the other chalk figure drawings. Needless to say, I burned out, and there is a big blank on my resume where I had to take some time off to recover. I kept on with my degree, and finished, but my job at the magazine was gone. I ended up with a job at WalMart after receiving my MFA.

I got a call from an old friend from 20 years before, who asked me for the 3rd time if I would want to teach at John Brown University. I went ahead and applied this time. I have taught design classes, drawing, figure drawing, and I will just begin teaching illustration in the fall.

Do you enjoy teaching?

When you follow a student from their freshman year through graduation, that point of receiving a diploma does choke me up. I'm always happy for them knowing how they have matured and changed over the few years that we have them. Most of them will start out being paid more than I make.

What artists have influenced you over the years and why?

My biggest influence was Joseph Cain, the teacher I had from Jr high through high school. Seeing him every weekend for so many years, we naturally grew to become friends. After HS graduation, I attended the college where he was chairman of the art department, and I was fortunate to spend another two years under his guidance. He passed away while I was away for my Jr and Sr year, and my biggest regret was not having a piece of his work.

What are your favorite art techniques?

For ATCs, I mostly use colored pencil, markers and gouache. As far as my favorite techniques for my own artwork, right now I would say my wire and installation work is most rewarding, and assemblage comes a close second.

What themes interest you?

With ATCs, I love to draw things that have a personal attachment, so my love of wind-up robots are always fun. I'm not so much into landscape, but more into work that deals with the human condition. Which makes for a difficult trade.





Do you listen to music when you create?

Yes, I blast it when no one is around. My current favorites are “Over the Rhine”, and “Regina Spector.”

How did you learn about ATCs and/or Mailart?

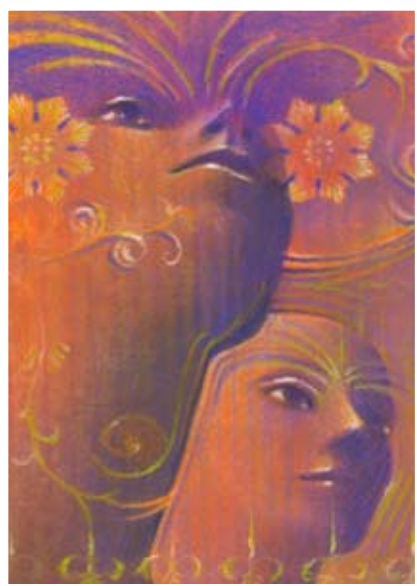
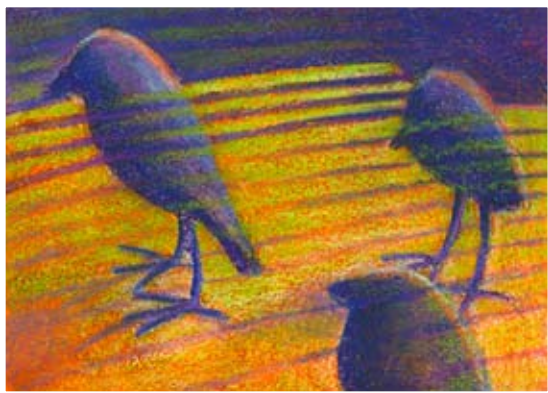
I first read about them in a publication. I studied up and thought it would be a great project to do for my illustration class. That proved to be successful. I wanted to learn more, so I joined the first site I found. What I failed to read was how addicting they are.

Is Mailart of any value to you as an artist?

I love my collection of ATCs; I love the variety. It not only represents my connection to people all over the world, but it is also a reminder of how much work I have done, and how far the work travels. I have many of the pieces framed and fill my office and home.

What media do you use for most of your ATCs?

I would be lying if I said anything but colored pencils. In the art world, I’m the wire guy, and online, I think I’m mostly known for my colored pencils.



***“I love to draw things
that have a
personal attachment”
~Joel Armstrong***





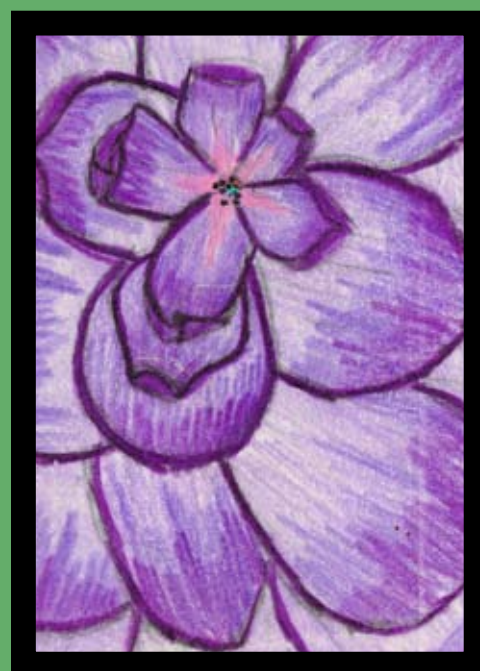
Petite Artiste: Getting to Know Kid Artists! *Featuring Ashley Taylor*

Ashley is a thirteen-year-old artist from Maple Valley, WA. She has been interested in art since she was five or six.



Some of Ashley's favorite things to draw include "plants, landscapes and flowers." As a medium Ashley says: "I like using colored pencils the best." Ashley lists some of the things that she does with her completed artwork, "Sometimes I hang it in my room or store it in my art file." As for Ashley's thoughts on art classes, she says: "I will be taking my first art classes in my third and fourth quarters of

7th grade." Ashley also won first place in an art contest in the 5th grade at her school: "I won by drawing a picture of an outdoor kitchen for my dad (a chef)." Ashley plans on participating in future art contests at school.



Glass Art: How to Make a Glass Artist Trading Card

by Meran niCuill

As a long-time glass artist, I have been looking for ways to unite glass with the Artist Trading Card (ATC) universe. After careful consideration and trial and error, I was able to come up with a successful way of combining glass with mail art. The following technique does not require a glass studio, but you will have to purchase additional materials (glass blanks and glass paint).

Step 1: Preparing the Glass Base

I started with what I call a glass blank. Take a piece of stained glass, which can be what is called a 'scrap' and cut it to just a hair under 2.5" by 3.5", using a glasscutter. (Glasscutters are relatively cheap, at about \$3. Remember to run it through some machine or olive oil before using it on glass.) Or you can have the glass cut for you at any hardware or framing store. Clear glass can also be used, but I used a colored glass, since I wanted some of the blue to show through as 'sky'. (See Figure 1 for examples of glass blanks.)

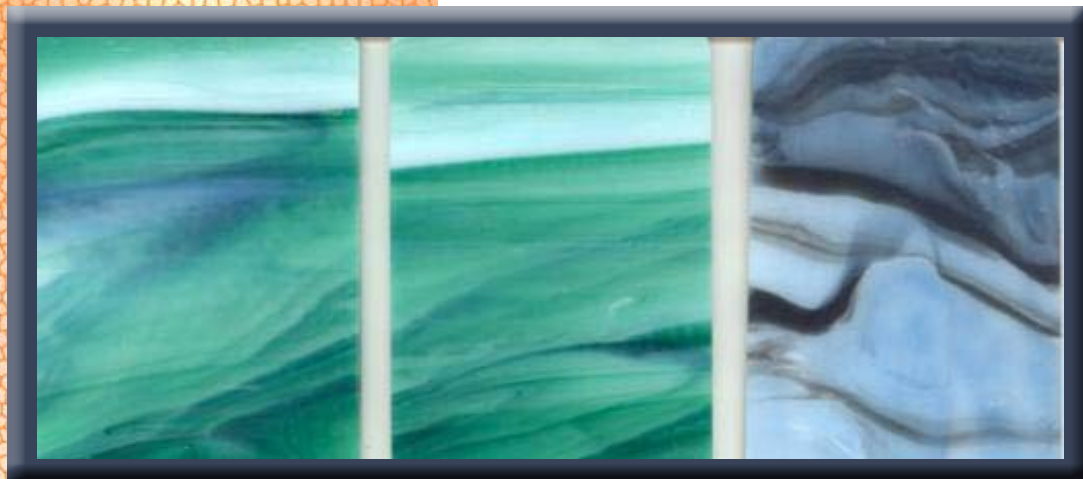


Figure 1

Material and Tools:

- Glass blank
- Sandpaper
- Glass paints (I use Pebeo Vitrea 160)
- Paint wells or palettes if desired
- Soft natural hair paintbrushes
- Reference picture or sketch
- Transfer paper or carbon paper
- Pencil or scribe
- Razorblade or Xacto knife
- Water in container
- Paper Towels
- Clean hands (no pre-applied lotion!)
- Rubbing alcohol

Check the edges of the blank. If they are still sharp, use sandpaper to smooth the edges. I do this over a wastebasket. Clean your blank in dish soap and water; dry well.

Step 2: Selecting Glass Paint

There are many glass paints on the market: Some are only to be fired in a kiln, others are air-cured, and then there are

the oven-fired ones. I normally prefer the kiln-fired types, but for our purposes here, I'm using an oven-cured paint, since most people have access to a kitchen oven. Made by Pebeo, Vitrea 160 has a more transparent color selection than the company's other product, Porcelain 150. They both are similar in workability, however.

Vitrea 160 comes in 20 glossy and 10 frosted (matte) paint colors, 9 glossy and 9 frosted markers, and 10 glossy outliners; there are also several mediums, and a diluent, which is used as a thinner and brush cleaner, instead of water. Each 1.5 oz jar is approximately \$5. These paints can be found at Michaels, Hobby Lobby, and Dick Blick (who has the best price).

Step 3: Transferring Your Pattern

I use carbon paper or artists' transfer paper to transfer my design onto the glass. Set your glass blank on the work surface and carefully align the transfer paper (cut to ATC size) on the blank. Lay your layout design (I use tracing paper) on top of that. Carefully, holding all the papers in place, use a pencil or other stylus to re-trace the pattern pressing firmly through all the layers onto the glass blank. Before removing all those layers of paper, anchor the papers with your left hand while carefully lifting all layers away from the blank. Check to make sure all design lines came through. If it's just a mess, use the alcohol or soap and water to remove all from the glass and begin again. The glass blank cleans very easily. If all lines transferred to your satisfaction, then remove the paper.

Two things to remember about working with glass:

1. It takes 24 hrs for the paint to dry completely (although it is only workable for several hours)
2. If you really don't like how your piece or a certain section came out, it can be scraped off the glass easily, using a flat edged razorblade!



Figure 2

Step 4: Painting on the Blank

Pebeo Vitrea 160 paints are acrylic; painting on glass with these paints require no preparation of the surface, beyond simple cleaning. Many of the other types of glass paints require a primer or etching. The Vitrea paints flow on rather like fluid acrylics and are flexible enough to work with just about any artist's own painting style. After using several types of brushes, I would recommend any natural hair paintbrush. The others don't load up as well or put paint down on glass with any of the desired thickness.

Shake your jars as you pick out your palette. I also appraise the paint thickness at this time. These paints should not be very thick; add diluant if necessary to keep the paints at the proper thinness.

With your palette at hand, begin by mixing your background colors. The paint can be applied as is or mixed with a medium for more translucency. For this project, I wanted full coverage, so no extra medium was mixed in. Also, instead of mixing and blending my colors on a palette, I decided to mix them on the painting itself as I went along.

I began on the cardinal, adding purples and blues to the reds and oranges as I went, trying to work in the shadows at the same time. With this process, you must work all details and shadings in while everything is still wet. Tacky, almost dry paint is no longer workable.

There are two good things about this: One is that it takes 24 hrs for the paint to dry completely (although it is only workable for several hours) and the other is that, if you really don't like how your piece or a certain section came out, it can be scraped off the glass easily, using a flat edged razorblade!

To ensure no accidental mixing of paint between areas, I painted the bird, let it dry overnight, then painted the leaves, let that dry over another night, then did the branch.

Moving on to the leaves! (See Figure 2.) Painting these was a bit hard as I had to pay attention to diffused light, direct light, and the changing colors of the leaves themselves. Again, I mostly mixed my paints right on the painting, mixing only a few colors up before applying.

The next day, I worked on the branch. When I was all done, I checked all over the piece to make sure I was happy with my results. Then, again, it must dry at least over night. In this case, since humidity was very high, I let my piece sit and dry for a week. If the glass paint isn't dry enough, it'll bubble up while "oven-curing"!

A Note on Card Protectors

Because glass is 1/8" thick, it will not fit into the "normal" plastic sleeves we use to protect our cards. There are two things you can do: one is to grind or cut your glass blanks 1/16" smaller in size to 2 7/16" by 3 7/16"; the other is to buy "vintage card sleeves", which are just slightly over the 2 5/8" by 3 3/4" size of regular sleeves.

Step 5: Firing or Oven-Curing Your Card

Put the glass blank, touching it only on the sides, directly onto the oven rack. Bake in your oven at 325 degrees for 40 minutes. Turn off the oven when it's cooked for the full 40 minutes, and let it cool, with the oven door closed. Do not touch it or handle it until it is room temperature!

Now, look at your first lovely glass ATC!

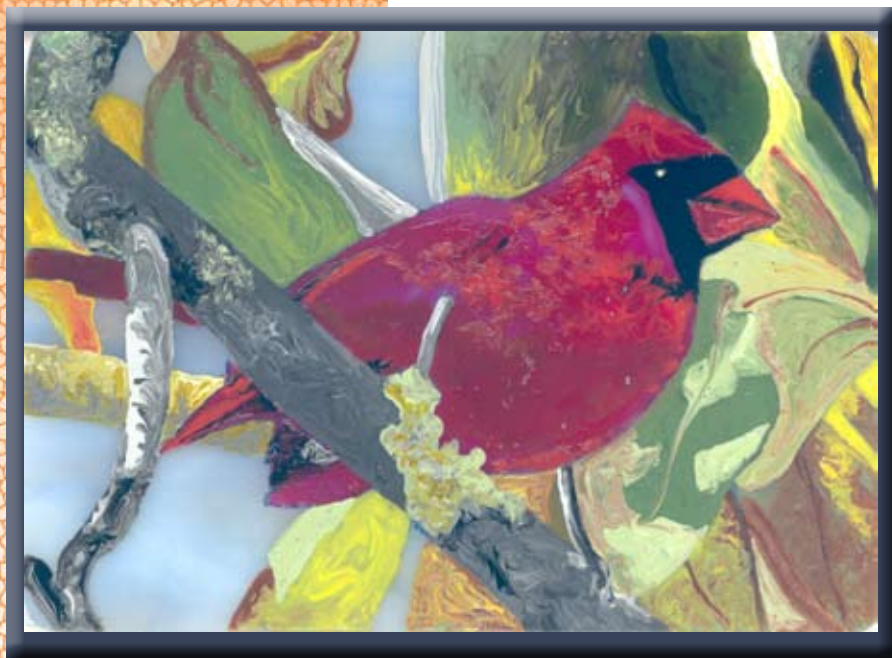


Figure 3

Creating Assemblage Art Charms

By Dana Driscoll

Assemblage art is a fun way to use found objects, ephemera, vintage jewelry and other objects to create unique art forms. In this article, I'll be demonstrating how to make a wire-bound assemblage art charm.

When I begin to create assemblage art, I pull out boxes, containers, and jars of possibilities for creating charms. Many of these are pieces of vintage jewelry and other objects I've collected through the years from garage sales and flea markets. Old broken jewelry, small charms, anything and everything goes! I combine these items with found objects – rusted bottle caps, washers, glass bits, etc. Here is the pile of things I started to work with for my assemblage art charms:



Next, I begin by rummaging through the pile of goodies. I find pieces that I think may fit together, and pull them out. I start making several piles of these for different charms. Here is one such grouping – a found object (round); several vintage charms, some old copper wire salvaged from a telephone, a key, a mother of pearl button, and other jewelry pieces.



After I have the items assembled, I start by arranging them on the table in various ways and the piece begins to take shape. For this piece, I decided to use wire to attach the objects to each other—the wire gives it more of a gritty feel, which is what assemblage art is all about! Depending on the piece, you might also want to use metal-appropriate glues.

Here is the next step—the piece is starting to come together with the wire. I keep adding pieces to the charm until I feel it is complete! Volia!

*You can do a lot with your
assemblage art charms.
Here are some ideas!*

- Wear them as a fashion statement with a bold outfit
- Give them as gifts to your family and friends
- Trade them in swaps or with friends
- Hang them in a window, car, or from a light fixture
- Use them as decorations on gifts or use them as ornaments
- Use them as embellishments on handmade books or other larger art



Here is the complete set of charms I created for the
'Altered Objects Charm' Swap (which I hosted at ATcards).
Lots of neat assemblages here!

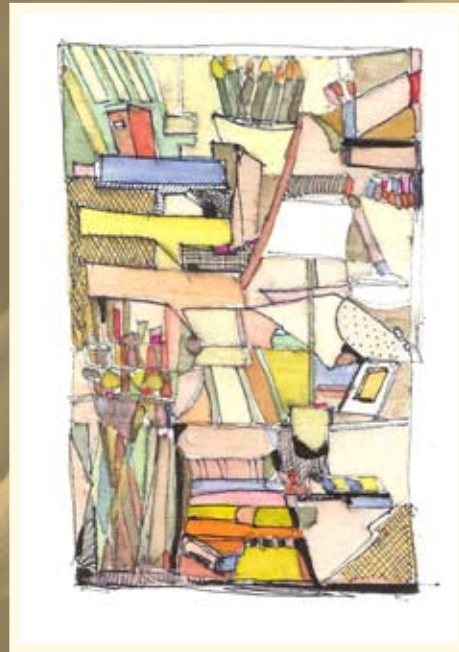


ATC Gallery: Fine Art Cards

A swap hosted at www.illustratedATCs.com



Dana Driscoll



William Yu



Anne el-Habre



Robyn Tisch-Hollister



Joel Armstrong



Livia Hajovsky



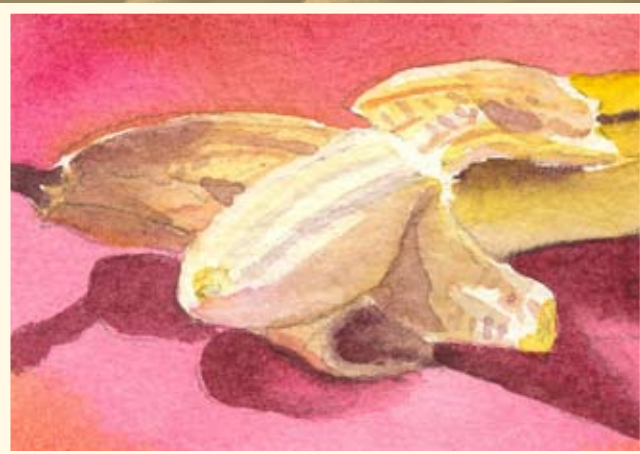
Cat Insley



Margaret Baxter



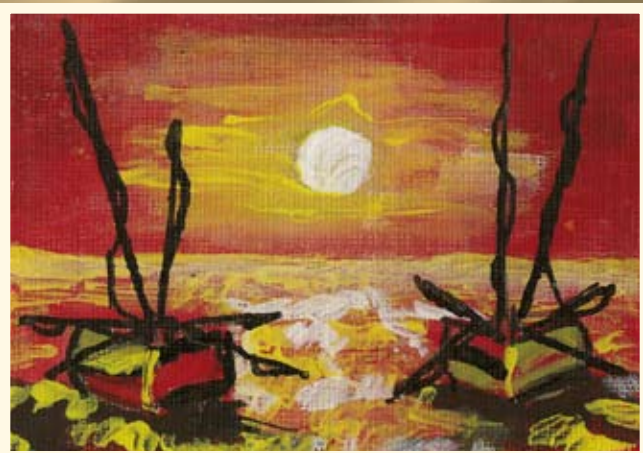
Sal Scheibe



Joyce Ripley



David Diamond



Glenna Thurman



Meran ni Cuill

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

(And how to make yours do so)

By Angela Kingston-Smith

STEP ONE: THE MAIN FOCAL POINT

We begin with the focal point - that is to say, the main point of the viewer's attention. My picture depicts a small boy, Hamish Fairfax, and his young troll friend, out frolicking on a raft. Indeed, my trolls do bear a striking resemblance to orangutangs. Good spotting!). For these I used photographic references, sourced from my favorite online photographic archive - Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>). ALWAYS use photographic (or real) references in your work. It is surprising how much you miss out on when mentally visualizing. Try to never use other people's art except when absolutely necessary; not only is this plagiarizing, but you also run the risk of copying their mistakes and adding in your own.

See Figure 1

We have the main focal point - now to add in the details, turning this from a simple picture into an illustration.

STEP TWO: THE CORNERS

There are several things to remember when drawing into the corners of a picture. One is balance, another is cluttering. You do not want too much activity in every corner because that will make the picture cluttered and chaotic.

I shall start with the bottom right hand corner. I have chosen this point for several reasons - one being that it is big and empty and two being that is where the little troll (his name is Jasper, by the way) is looking. So what is he looking at?

See Figure 2

Why, it's a goosander and she has babies! Now that we have a picture in the bottom right, we have to balance it out. The top left and bottom left corners are both currently "dead space", so what shall we put in them?

We could put more ducks in the bottom left, maybe a whole family of them. I wonder how that would look?

See Figure 3



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Not bad - but it's starting to get a bit cluttered. This will distract us somewhat from our main focal point (the boy and the troll). Maybe I should try something less animated instead. Some pretty waterlilies, perhaps?

See Figure 4

Now we shall turn out attention to the top left. What would be good up here? Because it is diagonally opposite the goosander, I would like to balance her with another bird.



Figure 4



Take a look at the two pictures above. Which one do you think looks more captivating?

I am hoping you would say "the one on the left". Why might that be? Well, there are two reasons:

- ~ the branch forms an artificial corner - framing the picture.
- ~ the kingfisher is gazing down at our main focal point, thus focusing our attention towards it.

The bee-eater is flying off the page, which is detrimental because not only does it mean that we've scared the poor thing away, but also that it will take the viewer's gaze with it off into the void.

For an easy comparison, let us look at it again, but this time comparing it with one flying in the opposite direction:



It really does make a difference, doesn't it?

Now the corners are done. There is no need to add anything to the top right because the fishing pole forms a natural border of its own. Whilst we could add in some leaves or flowers or even a dragonfly, it is not necessary and would add to the clutter. For similar reasons I have purposely left the right and left hand sides open. Because our wee lad is rafting on a river, I want it to be able to flow uninterrupted from left to right.

STEP THREE: THE BACKGROUND

Before we commence work on the background, we must ask ourselves: How responsible are Hamish's parents? Are they the sort of parents that would allow their young son to frolic in a raging, wide river, or is he merely dabbling in a knee-height creek?

Given his parents are indeed responsible, and love him very much, he's playing in a little creek. And don't fret, for trolls are very good swimmers, and if any misfortune did befall him, Jasper would save him.

To illustrate my background, I returned to my good old friend, flickr, and did a search for "rainforest" and "creek". Selecting the most relevant pictures, I chose elements of each and replicated them approximately into the background.



The first is a rather pleasant rainforest grove, with dark reflections cast upon the almost still waters. I bet that eels live in there! Oh well, it gives Hamish something to catch. I've also taken the opportunity to add in Jasper's feet (see, he has webbed, flipper feet – he's not an orangutang at all) and Hamish's other hand.

See Figure 5

If Hamish's parents were the sort to allow him to play on raging rivers, I would have drawn the waterline at about the same point, but instead I made the foliage much lower and less defined, to give the impression that it was further away.

To add a little excitement and variation into the right hand corner, I decided to incorporate a small waterfall. Nothing too dramatic. The bushy fern in the top right acts as a partial border.

Now we just have to add in the reflections and voila, we're done!

See Figure 6

Or are we?

STEP FOUR: FINISHING TOUCHES

What we have now is a fairly nice picture of a boy and his troll-friend fishing. It does not, however, tell you much about their personalities and it does not tell a complete story. This is a trickier stage, because for this final polishing, you need to know your characters. Or at the very least, be able to think a little like them. Luckily for me, Hamish and Jasper are both characters that, while they have not been featured in any of my stories (they're too young), I have been conceptualizing them for some time, so I know them both quite well.

Hamish is a thoughtful, bookish type. He's kind to animals and old ladies. I know what you're thinking – so why is he fishing then? But really, there's no bait on the hook – or no hook under the bait, and if he were to catch anything he would likely throw it back, after keeping it in a bucket or small pool long enough for Jasper to draw it.

Yes, that's right, Jasper might be a troll, but he's no fierce little monster! He likes to draw and hopes to be a cryptozoologist. Unfortunately, they don't accept faerie folk into university. Not yet at any rate. But we're digressing now.

Few sensible young lads would go out for an expedition on the river without being properly prepared. So let's add a few little props into the picture. See if you can find them!

See Figure 7



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

STEP FIVE: LET THE COLORING COMMENCE!

I use a slightly unusual method of coloring – I prefer to start with the background. Some people start from the foreground. I think this is because it is quite easy to make mistakes and these are easier to cover up by adding in more backgrounds. Now, I'm not saying I don't make mistakes, because I most assuredly do, but I rather like watching the white patches getting smaller and smaller. Also, I apply my color so thickly that I imagine it would be fairly easy for me to disguise any mistakes.

Such is my fear of goofing up, that I never color directly onto my original line-art. There are other reasons for this too – my sketchbook is so scratched up and smudged and erased that the paper has deteriorated in some patches. Also, if you print it out first, it gives you the opportunity to erase those unfortunate extra lines that cross over important bits because you had already inked that bit when you realized that it would be really nifty to, say, add a beetle on the branch or stick a lizard in the kingfisher's beak. This also gives me the chance to cut and paste line-art from previous works into the page, if I so desire. But we won't do that here; this piece will be 100% original. It also means that I can print directly onto paper of the 8x8 inch size, thus meaning I don't have to engage in any unfortunate cutting.

Before I can color, I scan my line-art thoroughly and erase any bits that I remember shouldn't be there. Then I set the printer to "black and white" and print it onto a piece of 8x8 paper. Before I do this, I set the image size to 7.8 x 7.8, otherwise it sets up margins and you will lose the very outer parts of your image. These can usually be filled in later. When set to black and white, my printer (an ancient Canon inkjet) prints the lines at a light grey – easy to colour over. If yours prints too darkly, you might like to up the brightness on the original image to make it paler. Also keep in mind that markers will bleed into printed ink. If you like to color in marker pens, leave a 2 mm gap between the parts you color and use a nice sharp coloring pencil instead. (Thanks Amerasu for that tip!) If you don't, you may get a murky edge. Now it's your turn to go forth and ILLUSTRATE. You'll need a few tools, of course.

Here's the essentials that I am never without:

- **Mechanical Pencils** - I prefer these to the regular sharpen-as-you-need-it sort because I like my pencil to be nice and pointy. I use regular HB pencils for my line-art, because I have the tendency to smudge my work. A 2B has been proven to work fairly well, but anything softer than that and it all turns into a big smudgy mess.
- **Eraser** - absolutely essential to every illustrator! Always choose a good quality eraser. The soft ones seem to work better. Test them first to make sure they do not smudge nor tear up your paper.
- **Fine Ink pens** - I use Uni Pin fine liners (made by UniBall), because they don't smudge when I erase over them. For fine details, like eyes, petals etc, I use a 0.3 mm nib; for the nice bold outlines I use 0.8 and I have a 0.5 as well, which does not attract quite as much use, but is still very, very handy for those medium thickness lines.

Now on to the Inspiration!

Where to look to find inspiration? What if you're itching to draw, but just can't think of what story you want to tell? For aspiring authors like myself, it's easy: I have so many characters and stories in my head, it's like a carnival. But if you're not a writer, it might be a little harder. Here are a few ideas:

- Your favorite place - somewhere you would like to be, right now, even if it's mostly in your head.
- Another country/culture.
- Pick up your favorite book, and illustrate your favorite scene.

Just don't forget those photo references!

Now, get that imagination fired up and create your own visual stories. And stay tuned for our next action-packed episode: I shall show you how to color.



Art Vlogging! Part One: Art Empowerment

by Annie Melion

Art Blogs are a great place to get inspired. Vlogging on the other hand is taking the Art Blog in a whole new direction and is the video-based answer to Art Blogging. Where before we read text and looked at still photos, now we can hear the artist's voice, watch them move and see how they create their work. This two-part series gives us a glimpse into the world of Art Vlogging and introduces us to some of the faces behind (and in front of) the camera. YouTube is probably the most popular website for video sharing. Members have homepages called 'channels' from which they broadcast their videos. All of the artists featured in this series were found on YouTube.

Suziblutube: Suziblu's personality and artistic style is thought provoking and quirky. Her videos feature projects, demonstrations, advocacy, and her adorable cat Pooh.

What kind of camera do you use? I use a Panasonic mini-cam.

What editing program do you use? iMovie 6 - I bought Final Cut Express though and I'm learning that.

How many hours do you spend working on your Vlog?

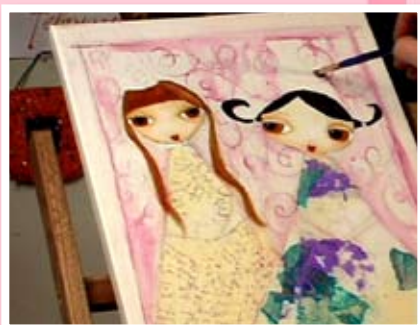
Making a video takes 2 or 3 days; one day to paint and film the painting, another day to film talking stuff and extra stuff like kitties and life and such. And then either I will edit it all the second day or put it off until the third day and edit then. Editing takes 3 hours for a YouTube 4-6 minute video. It's funny because I started making videos out of boredom, just something to entertain myself and I thought people might be interested in the art process. But it has taken off into an entirely new direction. The videos in and of themselves have been a vehicle for me to do good in the world. I am finding so many women displaced emotionally in mid-life and it's apparent, it's So Very Important that we support each other, truly, with an atmosphere of creative freedom. Doing the videos has been an amazing journey that's taking me away from the idea of teaching art techniques - and instead helping women to unleash themselves onto the world, via art!

Find Suzi Blu on the Internet:

<http://www.youtube.com/suziblutube>

<http://www.suziblutube.etsy.com>

<http://suziblu.blogspot.com/>



Willowing: From Rose symbolism to self-love and promoting nonviolent communication, Tamara uses her Art Vlog to express humanism, giving, and beauty.

What kind of camera do you use?

I use a SONY handycam E105. For photography, I use a Nikon d70. However, sadly, most video editing software and YouTube compress the vids so the quality of these cams doesn't really come through much. Oh, for one vid I used a mobile phone camera because the laptop didn't register the handycam! The mobile phone camera wasn't bad at all: NOKIA N95.

What editing program do you use?

I have mostly used Windows Movie Maker, but am currently learning Adobe Premiere Pro and I'm looking into using Ulead video editing software [ed. Ulead VideoStudio]. The other day I tried out something called 'Muvee' or something and that looked quite nice too, although a bit limited.

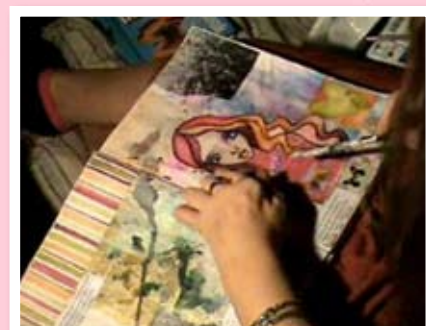
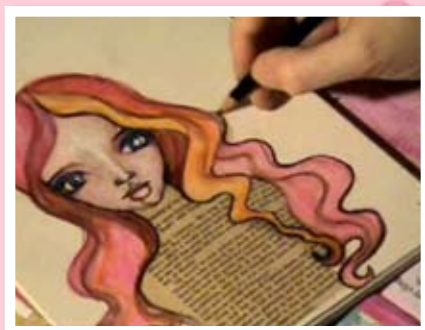
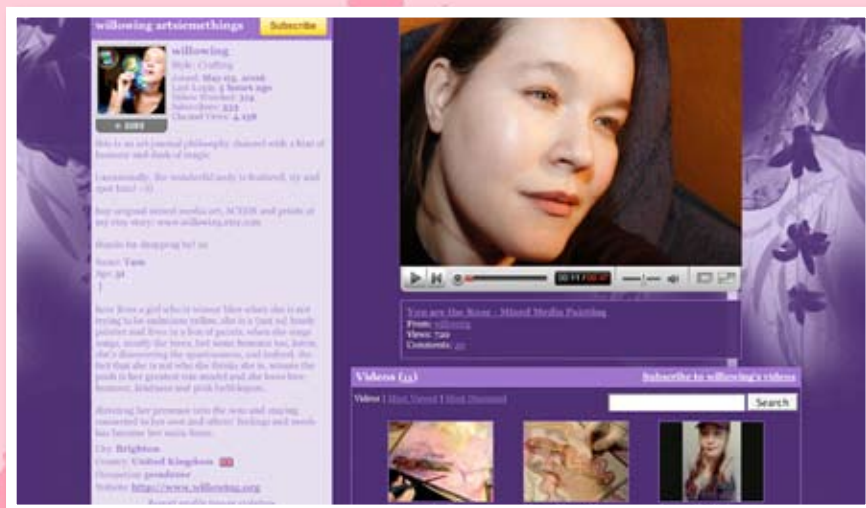
How many hours do you spend working on your Vlog?

I always art journal and make art, but not all of that becomes part of the vlog. I think I spend about 8-12 hours on making (this includes filming first and then editing the whole thing) a 10 min video. Hee hee. This because I am an insane perfectionist and go edit-crazy

Find Tamara on the Internet:

email: willowing@gmail.com
<http://www.youtube.com/user/willowing>
<http://www.willowing.org>
<http://www.willowing.etsy.com>

Art Vlogging!



ATC Gallery: Mixed Media Trees

This swap was for all artists interested in mixed media/collage who wanted to create multilayered work with a tree theme. For this theme, participants had to use at least three different medias/elements. For example, create the card with a collaged background, ink work, and stamps; or tissue/acrylic background and collaged foreground. Using multiple medias helps to create an interesting collage that captures the viewers eye.



Rebecca Allinson



Martha Cohen

*A seed hidden
in the heart of
an apple is an
orchard invisible.*

~Welsh Proverb

Lisa Brown



Elena Garcia



ATC Gallery: Mixed Media Trees



Elaine Parker



Lisa Brown



Ang Westerman

Dana Driscoll



Pat Schafer





Art Competition

Defining Mail Art

What does “Mail Art” mean to you? Our first Art Trader Magazine competition asks you to create your own artistic interpretation of your definition of “mail art.” This is an open media, open genre competition - the only limitation is your imagination!

Send your entries as high resolution scans or photographs of at least 300 dpi to editor@artradermag.com. Also send us a short (100 word or less) written description/interpretation of the piece along with your contact information. We will choose an assortment of entries to publish in our Summer 2008 issue. Additionally, the artist of our winning entry will be featured in an article in our Summer 2008 issue!

Each artist is allowed to submit up to three entries. Entries are due by June 20th, 2008.

Oil Pastel Artist Trading Card Walk-Through

Written by Abi Aldrich

Oil pastels are a wonderful material medium when you are looking to blend colors and build layers. The smooth, creamy nature of oil pastels lends them to blending easily. If you find that your oil pastels are waxy or are not blending well, it may be one of two general problems. The first is easy to check for: Simply try applying more pressure to the oil pastels. This should give a smoother layer of color. If you find that even with more pressure your oil pastels are still waxy, it is probably because they have dried out. The remedy for this problem is to replace your oil pastels.

Many times the messy process has kept people from using oil pastels. I have a few tricks that I use to keep my area and myself a little neater. I always put a regular piece of clean white paper under my work area. This provides an area for the mess created by oil pastels to end up. As you work through a project with oil pastels, you will find small bead-like rolls of oil pastel built up on your paper.



Simply lift up your work and gently brush the beads off with your finger. In addition, as you change colors you will notice that the oil pastels are picking up other colors on the pastel's surface. I use my white work area paper to simply make a mark with the oil pastel, which removes any excess colors and restores the oil pastel to its original color. As for keeping myself neater, I love to use disinfectant wipes to keep my fingers clean and if my mess spreads off my work area paper, to clean my work surface. These wipes cut through the oil, unlike trying to simply use a paper towel. The other solution would be soap and water, which can be inconvenient in the middle of working, but still doable.

My last trick to oil pastels is to break them, yes, break them. By breaking your oil pastels, it gives you get clean sharp edges which can be used to add fine details. Without further ado, here are the steps I use to create an oil pastel Artist Trading Card (ATC). All in all, I put on about 35 layers, but I tried to pick out layers that showed what was happening and were easy to follow.

Images of workspace:

Oil pastel sets, and my trusty tooth pick!

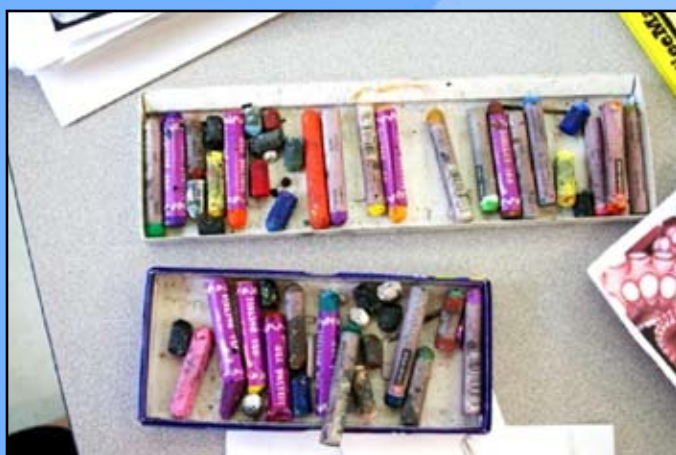


Image 1 is the initial drawing and can be done in pencil or with any sketching material you feel comfortable using. For my initial drawing I used purple oil pastel.



Image 2 shows the first layer, in which I laid down white oil pastel over the initial sketch. Generally white should go under all the other colors to make them more luminous, as well as it allows you to go back down to white if you make a mistake. I have used other colors as a base, but generally they are light colors first as it is easier to add darker colors and then move back down to the lighter colors for details and highlights.



Image 3 is the first layer of real color. I generally tend to do the background first. At this point I am not very concerned with staying off my drawing lines as I can use my toothpick to find and clean up the lines again.



Image 4 is about one quarter of the way through the application of background layers. If the image is looking waxy, use more pressure when applying the oil pastels to create a smooth, buttery feeling



Image 5 is almost done with the background layers.



Image 6 is the finished background. It shows where I have used my trusty toothpick and found the original shape of the octopus again by gently scraping back through to the white layer of oil pastel.



Image 7 is the first layer of color for the octopus. I used peach as my base color.



Image 8 is the third layer. I used red and dark pink as the middle values.



Image 9 is the fifth layer, dealing with the shading.



Image 10 is the removal of excess octopus. I have gone in with the toothpick and gently scraped the octopus color off where I went into the background.



Image 11 is the repair of the background after dealing with the excess octopus in the previous step.



Image 12 Using a white oil pastel I have added highlights to contrast the shading where I went into the background.



Image 13 is the first layer of text, which I created by using my toothpick to write through the colored layers to expose the white pastel layer beneath. The text I used was 'come on in, the water's fine'. I repeated this multiple times in cursive on a diagonal line.



Image 14 shows the backside of the card. Personally I like to leave the backs of my cards this way with the spots because it reminds me of the process, and it makes it unique. Before trading this card I will include my personal information, signature, date and the title of the piece on the back of the card.



Come on in, the water's fine...

Here is the finished product. I continued using the phrase 'come on in, the water's fine.' The second layer of text is on the same diagonal, however it is in block print.



Call for Articles and Artwork

Thank you for your interest in contributing to ArtTrader Magazine. ArtTrader Magazine is a web based publication (in PDF format) focused on mail art for trade such as ATCs (Artist Trading Cards), ACEOs, art journals, chunky books, altered art and altered books.

We are always accepting the following types of materials:

- “How to” or Step-by-step articles on artistic techniques. We are interested in techniques that can be applied to any mail art. These include illustrative techniques, and also works in fabric, digital, collage, mixed media, and more.
- Articles on artistic journeys or experiences. Do you have an interesting story that you would like to share? We would love to hear it.
- Artist Spotlight/Profile. Do you have a body of work you would like share? We would love to feature you in our artist spotlight.
- Showcasing Art. We are interested in showcasing assemblages, mixed media work, creative journaling, chunky books, fat books, inchies, ATCs (Artist Trading Cards), post cards and more. These types of articles usually have a small bit of background accompanying them but primarily are visual in nature.
- Product and Book Reviews. If you are interested in writing a review of a new product or book that is connected to the mail art world, we would love to hear about it.

Submissions of Artwork

Almost all of our articles require artwork submissions. You might also want to submit artwork to appear in our webzine galleries. Our call for artwork is always open and we welcome your submissions of ATCs, ACEOs, art journals, chunky pages or altered books. Everyone is welcome to submit their art. You do not need to be a member of IllustratedATCs.com to submit artwork.

You must submit your work to us in digital format.

- 300-400 DPI is sufficient. Do not submit artwork lower than 300 DPI.
- Acceptable formats include: JPG, BMP, TIF. Do not submit GIF files.
- Any submitted artwork should be at least 500 pixels wide and high (they can be much larger than this, of course!)

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