

Mixed Media or What is it about Mixed Media (for Me?)

There are all kinds (Drawing, painting, collage, assemblage, sculpture, repurposing found objects, depends on the materials, too.) Its about the materials. Why use more than one material/medium? What are the benefits? My work in mixed media is mostly 2D, combining drawing, collage with painting. For the past six years I've combined drawing and collage with encaustic (wax) painting. I do delve into 3D when it comes to surfaces, or support, such as upcycling/repurposing, and see possibilities with other mediums as I'm open to experimentation. Being a scavenger, I come across items which may make their way into my artwork.

*For example: **Cabinet doors-** Painting on wood (my preferred surface).*

*Wood- smooth, sturdy, easy for mounting photos onto, can take harsh/er treatment. Can build layers (paint, papers, photos). With cabinets, you may have a frame too and its easy to hang up on the wall.**

***Roofing paper/Tar paper-** (re-purposing, saving the environment)*

Fairly sturdy and the black background makes color contrast exciting, vibrant. Interesting textures- similar to black pastel paper, but heavy duty. You can tear it, easy to use (you don't have to prepare it), inexpensive. Comes in a roll, or leftover from roofing jobs.

*Different weights and surfaces. Works well with oil pastels, color pencils, acrylics, oils. Great for making acrylic prints of textures.**

CONSIDER:

YOUR art form. (What you are already doing; your preference- and what are the possibilities if you want to take it further/ADD to it. Or how/what to apply to your art; and make it your own.

EASE. I'm about immediacy in my painting (and drawing). More spontaneous; not so much planning, generally. Collage also can be spontaneous, intuitive, "Try this here, there..." Somehow an item or extraneous scrap of paper takes on an importance.

HOW do YOU work?

How much planning? Or, planning for effects, desired results?

MATERIALS

When choosing materials, consider: Texture, depth, layers. (Not that it has to be complex.)

Using texture, prints (Do you want the viewer to recognize what you're using to make the print in your artwork?)

What is your intention?

COMBINING MATERIALS (Mediums, for ex. paint, graphite collage with found objects, misc. papers.)

OBJECTS**

Using found objects in your artwork. Do you want it recognizable?

Paint over or make prints with the object?

Does it have meaning?

Does an object inspire you?

Are you planning to use an object in your artwork?

(or) Is it happenstance?

May lead you to experimentation

USING COLOR

Application of Color

Areas of Color. What it is next to, and how does it highlight your image, or elements in your artwork?

Palette & Combination of colors

Contrast

Light/dark - can show depth

Positive/negative space

To unify (relate, pick up on) one part of your artwork with another. (Color here and there- without going overboard aiming to create a balance.)

(Same can be said for misc. papers, maps, fabric, printed materials, etc....as an AREA- as if you're painting w/the scrap of paper, printed matter or pattern; putting it WHERE? What area/ placement is best for it, if you use it?

2D & 3D OPTIONS

2D- More focus on painting. Textures, how the paint looks (properties of the paint/material used), area it covers. How you apply the paint (for ex., brushstroke, drawing, or writing in paint.) For me, painting highlights my drawings or chosen photos, images.

3D- Assemblage, diorama, box (open or closed).

Purpose of box- Is it to contain, or frame your artwork? Consider full area. Is it to collect objects? Are there compartments? Sides of box- Do images, painting and color relate?

WET MEDIA. Oils, oil sticks, acrylic, watercolor, gouache, ink, liquid watercolors, enamel paint. Acrylics- work well for making prints, repeating images

DRY MEDIA. Pastel, (dry, chalk or oil pastel); conte crayon, pencil, graphite, charcoal (vine, compressed sticks, chunks, powder); colored pencils; litho crayon; china markers....

PAPERS

Maps, misc. papers, photos, postcards, newspaper, prints, books

FABRIC

SURFACE/SUPPORT

Paper (drawing paper, mixed media, watercolor, Arches print paper, handmade papers, rice paper, deli papers, synthetic parchment, photo paper, bristol, illustration board, etc.)

Canvas (stretched, panels); Yupo, vellum, mylar, acetate.

Wood

Consider the feel and outcome of your surface

Textures can make your artwork interesting

STENCILS

All kinds. What does it add?

BALANCE

Having balance in color, or size in order to highlight an object or image.

Looking to reach BALANCE- "Just right," in your opinion.

How do you know when enough is enough?

Is Mixed Media like cooking? Would you want to add all of your favorite ingredients? Flavor on top of Flavor? Or, would you be over doing it?

Embellish vs. being decorative. for example:

I may embellish w/dry brush- adding a certain color to edges, to draw out, add/emphasize dimension.) (Putting finishing touch on an artwork or illustration.)

WHAT IS YOUR FOCUS? IS THERE A THEME?

An image, object, shape, narration?

NOT SCRAPBOOKING, NOT COOKIE CUTTER (mass produced), **NOT PRESCRIBED** or, **FORMULATED** (as if a recipe)

UNIQUE

You are creating an artwork in mixed media.

In what context? You've selected/considered an art/medium for what project?

Diary, autobiographical, memoir, memorial?

Narrative? Powerful? Dark? Emotional? Humorous? Joking? Your reaction to...? Political?

Cathartic? Angry? Personal? Speaking out?

About what you're going through?

ABSTRACT VS REPRESENTATIONAL, or a little of both?

EFFECTS (Potential). So many choices! Variables! Possible directions!

TO COVER

Obliterate/distort

What goes over what? Next to? What looks best (in designing/arranging) Moving?

Ultimately, you are the designer— for your own reasons/preference

Is it Beautiful?

NO RIGHT OR WRONG

WHAT ELSE I LIKE ABOUT MIXED MEDIA/COLLAGES

You can go back and forth; add, subtract and build.

USING TECHNIQUES, but careful not to go overboard. Doesn't have to SCREAM- subtle can be good. depends on what you're aiming for. You have to satisfy yourself.

No "UNDO," yet you can paint over, scratch away, obliterate, etc. (PS, you can always take away)

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Sources:

* Community Forklift, 4671 Tanglewood Dr, Bladensburg, MD 20710 (301) 985-5180

<http://communityforklift.org>. (Cabinet Doors, roofing paper, etc.)

* SCRAPDC, 3101 12th Street NE|Washington DC 20017 | (202) 827-4547

<http://scrapdc.org> (Art supplies, misc. materials.)

**Thrift Stores, Antique Shops