

WEEK EIGHT:

Creative Voices

Week Eight: Discovering your Creative voice.

"Art is Theft"

~ Pablo Picasso

Now I am not 100% sure what Pablo Picasso is referring to in this quote. Is he saying that art is the theft of time?

Is he saying that as artists are we stealing a moment and capturing it for eternity?

Or is he saying that all art is basically stealing from someone or something else?

And who knows if he actually said 'Art is Theft' - but I found the quote on the Internet and I liked it. And after all if it is on the Internet so it must be true right?? ;)

However in all seriousness I do believe that as part of your artistic journey you should try some thievery!

If you think outside of the artistic sphere for a moment - don't most genres of movies have the same core story lines and don't most books have the same troupes?

And if you think about what actually makes a great movie or book, you realise the best ones are those that have a surprising twist or when writers have a unique spin on a generic genre or troupe. Do you remember the "I see dead people" movie Sixth Sense? How awesome was that bombshell at the end of the movie? (No spoilers if you haven't seen it ;)

In the artistic sphere you can make great art too with your OWN marks and your own surprising twist or unique spins. But finding your creative voice can sometimes feel like finding the needle in the haystack!

The needle in this case represents your creative voice, and the hay represents the millions of artists, their mediums, their different colour choices, the patterns they incorporate in their work etc.

And everyone 'says' find your voice, your style, your unique 'thing' but how do you figure out what mediums, colours, patterns, techniques, 'things' etc you will want to work with?

When I sat down at the beginning of my creative journey, I thought about all the different mediums that I wanted to explore. I actually wrote a list!

I knew that clay and pottery were out - I don't like the feel of clay under my fingernails or on my hands. I am not even a big fan of play dough!

I thought that painting was out when I began - I didn't feel good enough to paint 'properly', and I wanted to explore outside of pencils so in the end I settled for using alcohol markers (i.e promarkers or copic pens) to play with and explore. For me these were a happy middle ground between drawing

and painting.

Next I had to figure out what I wanted to actually create, so I trawled through Flickr (this was before pinterest) to find what styles and subjects appealed to me.

I did go a bit overboard though! I had a book that I glued in artworks of different artists that I was obsessed with.

But the one thing that I loved to do was an exercise that I called 'the internet inspires'! And on Mondays when the girls were sleeping I had a standing date with myself and I found all the things on blogs and flickr that inspired me and I would draw the in my notebook.



From this I would explore everything - I sewed, I collaged, I collected random ephemera - keys, wires, ribbon, paddle pop sticks, match boxes and I created everything that appealed to me!

And I copied. I wasn't trying to make these things different or uniquely mine they were straight out and out copies of things I had seen online or in a magazine.

So I believe the very best way to learn artistic styles and techniques is to simply copy them. Like I did. Line for line colour for colour, I would copy the artists that I loved; mimic their styles and their colours, their techniques, their materials and their subjects.

A little caveat here: I do want to make myself perfectly clear. I am not advocating the copy of another artists work which you then pass off as your own. This is not the point of this week's class, however I believe you can use their art works to learn and develop our own style. (And unfortunately there are so many people who do this including big corporations)

Copying an artist's work and passing it off as your own original art is wrong and I believe Karma will bite you on the ass for it.

And it is for that very reason, that for many years I thought that copying art so wrong and was just another reason that I couldn't possibly be an artist. My little bitch would tell me I was a fraud, a hack, and a thief!

Fortunately around the time I started creating again, I stumbled onto a book called 'Steal Like an Artist' by Austin Kleon.

This book totally blew my mind because it legitimized what I was already doing. His book lifted the cloud of shame I was creating in, because after years of believing that copying is bad, and telling myself that I couldn't draw anything original, his book gave me hope that I too could be an artist!

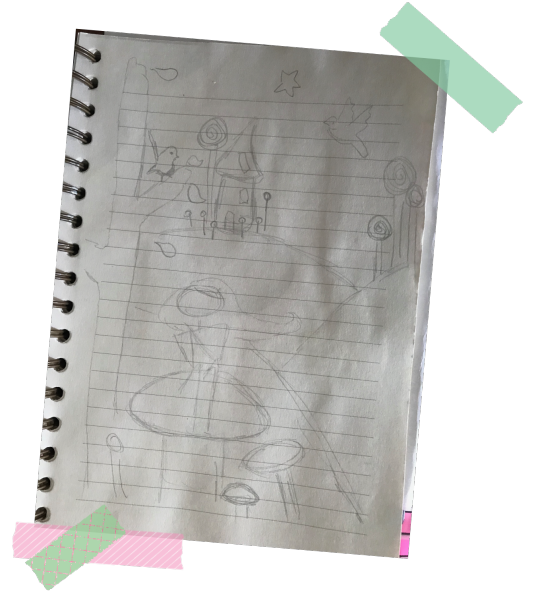
His philosophy is that there are *good* and bad ways to steal.

He believes if we study many artists, and their styles and techniques, and by crediting their influence, by remixing and incorporating with your spin or uniqueness you can honor the original artist whilst learning what intrigues and inspires you.

And by stealing like an artist when I did try to recreate other artist's work I would learn so much.

I figured out what subjects I loved to create and what I didn't. I learned what mediums I loved play with and what I really didn't. I learnt that despite thinking I wasn't a painter I was and I loved it.

And my copying changed. I started to put my own spin on what I was creating. I would use different mediums to recreate the art I was copying. And I would add things, or change things that made them less like their artworks and more like mine.



You see that they were still influenced by the artists I was stealing from, but after more exploring, and copying, and learning and playing, eventually my artworks became my own. I didn't have to copy an artwork to create something I liked. I finally had my own unique creative voice.

Some of my influences, and artists that I have 'thieved' from include:

- Vincent van Gogh from who I learned that if I recreated his unique style with pencils my hand would cramp up, but that perspective and proportion were not as important as I thought they were. And it was ok not to have everything proportionally correct.
- From Roy Lichtenstein, I learned that cartoonish drawings were a legitimate style and I loved that you didn't have to shade to show depth.
- Amy Brown (the fairy artist) I learned that I didn't need to define hands or feet to make art! (To this day I tend to hide those areas in my paintings!)
- Natalia Pierandrei I learned that every day subjects could be transformed into art. She appealed to my whimsical side and totally fed my marker pen addiction.
- From Tam Laporte I discovered my love of mixed media art, using acrylics and being true to what I loved to do.

So why shouldn't you steal like an artist and use this as just another tool on your creative journey? Finding your creative voice will be just as unique as

you are! And I believe that stealing like an artist will help you find it.

But remember - the most important key to finding your creative voice isn't theft. The most important thing to your creative voice is to actually **MAKE THE ART!**

If you don't play, explore and create you will never find your style or your creative voice. And I have some ideas that will help you!



8.1 REFLECTION: A Collection of Inspiration.

Prep: 30 minutes

Time: 10 - 40 minutes

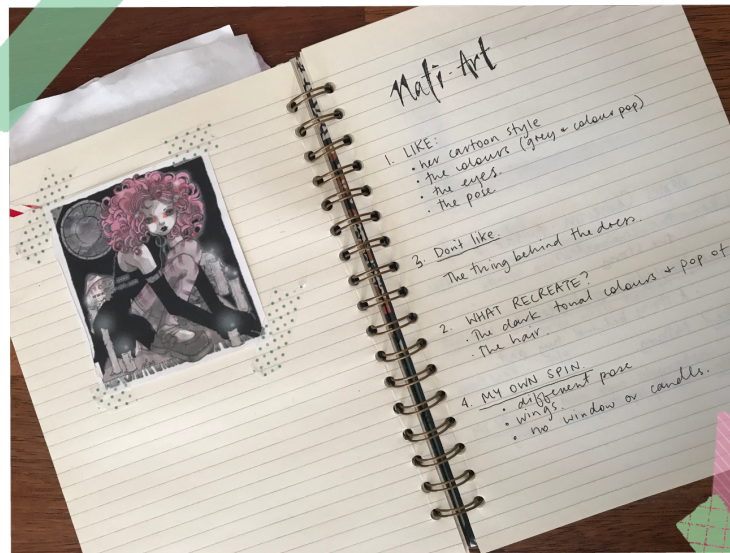
Equipment: Your notebook, pen,

printed out images, glue stick

As I am a bit of a hoarder ahem 'collector', it will come as no surprise to you that I have books filled with artworks from various artists that I liked and stacks of cards and postcards, that I would collect and then used when I was developing my artistic voice. I used these books and files to find something that inspired me and would copy it.

NOW I am not asking you to fill a whole book (that is my hoarder tendencies coming out!) but I want you to find a couple of artists or images that inspire you and have a style that you may like to recreate.

Go online, or to your local library, pinterest and find some images that inspire you. They don't have to be all the same style, techniques or subject matters. In fact it would be better if it weren't.



They don't have to be all visual artists either - sculptors, musicians, writers or directors should be included too.

Choose between three and seven images and print them off. (Or you could have a secret pinterest board called 'steal like an artist' and collect the images in there.)

Open your notebook to a double page and glue an image on one side of the double page spread. (Feel free to decorate it however you want if you want!)

On the other side of the spread I would like you to write down the answers to these questions:

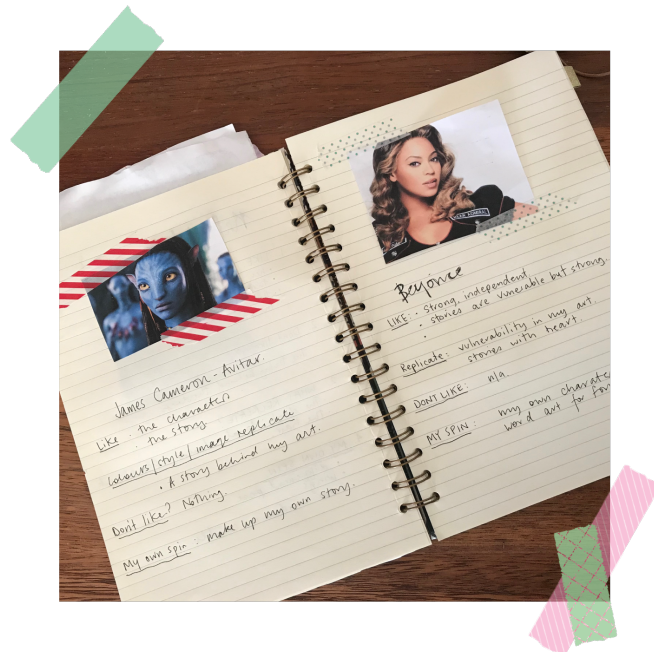
1. What do you like/ love about this artist, this painting or this image? (Remember we can choose a whole body of work, or just a

painting and it can be other non-visual artists)

2. What colours, techniques, style, patterns and mediums do you want to recreate that is typical of your artist/ image (if any)?
3. What don't you like (if anything)?
4. How would you put your own spin on it? Would you change a colour, a technique, add something, not include something?
5. What else is there about this artist/ image that you would like to recreate or see in your own art?

If you can't find artists that inspire you, try ripping out some images from magazines that inspire you and write about those.

Come back to this if you don't have time to finish it all in one sitting.



8.2 ACTION: Copy What You Love.

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Your notebook, computer paper + pen.

Find your inspirational images that you have pasted into your notebook

In this action exercise I would like you to recreate some of what you love/ like/ were attracted to in the image.

And you can complete this exercise in several different ways.

You can:

1. Recreate the whole image exactly like your artist has.
2. Recreate the image - but use different mediums or techniques Like I did with this Amy Brown picture



3. Choose the part you love the most and sketch it out on the paper
4. If it is a colour or pattern that has drawn you - recreate that instead.
5. Was there something you didn't like? Change it!

Little Bitch Buster

What if your little bitch is saying to you that there is no possible way that you can find your artistic voice or create anything like the image you are trying to recreate?

She did that to me! And if the techniques that we learned in week five didn't work to shut her up then I used this simple technique.

To begin with I didn't try to copy a whole image. Instead I would start with the part I really loved first - an eye, or a fold in the clothing, the shadow under a chair.

I concentrated here first, and then I would move onto the next thing in the image that I liked.

Like in the drawing what we see lesson last from last week - I would draw what I saw - a line a curve a squiggle and look at in relation to other lines, curves and squiggles.

I didn't name parts and I took it line by line.

So start with what you love first. And then add a little bit more. And a little bit more, until you have the whole image recreated!

8.3 FUN: Putting it all together and finding your voice!

Time: 30 minutes

Equipment: Your notebook + pen, graphite pencil
baking paper, scissors, glue etc.

In your reflection exercise you glued in several images that inspired you. For this exercise I want you to go back those images and revisit your answers to the questions about what you liked about the image.


Grab a post-it or something to write on and quickly write down a list of the things that you were most inspired by in the image. Be specific. For example:

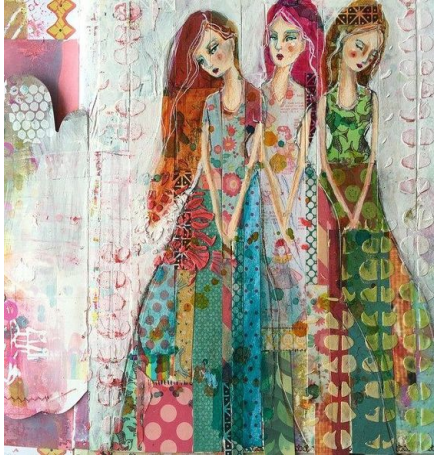
- The red colour used and how it was applied to the image
- The pattern used in the background of an image
- The shape and style of the eyes of the girl in an image
- The subject matter of a cat in an image
- The technique of mixed media in an image.

How might you then use these elements to create your own image?

Think about what you would create and how you would incorporate you list into that creation.

Take these ideas for example:

IMAGE + ARTIST	WHAT I LOVE ABOUT IT AND TO INCLUDE IN MY ART?
 <p>Created by Amy O'Neill amyoneillblog.com</p> <p>Artist: Amy O'Neill</p>	<p>*I love the circular mixed media pattern on the card and the splashes of teal colour in the background.</p> <p>****</p> <p>I could make a circle pattern in the background using texture paste and a home made stencil use a punch to cut out circles from an old art work or use bubble wrap to make a pattern</p> <p>For the splatters I can use an old toothbrush and scatter teal paint around.</p>

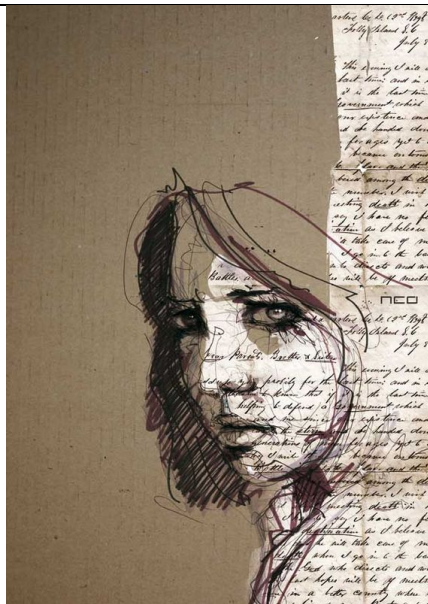


Artist: Jane Davernport

I love the colour of the clothing and the muted ness and texture of the background in this image

I could collage different scrap book papers onto a sheet of paper in lines and then rip them up and use them as clothing in my image

I could use white paint to mute the background of my image and draw patterns into it before it dries.



Artist: Florian Nicolle

I love the writing on the background of this image and how the artist has only covered some of it.

I could cover the background with journaling using a permanent black marker and then use white gesso to cover only some of my journaling.



image: pinterest

I love those wings.

I could trace them using baking paper and copy them onto my image.

Or I could use the baking paper copy and collage over the copy and then cut them out and use them.



Artist: Natalia Pierandrie

I love the hair and her pose in this image.

I could copy the pose either free drawing it or I could use baking paper again and trace over it and use it as the base of my girls pose.

My final image may not include all or any of these things, but this exercise gives me a starting point to play and explore.

So play and explore yourself and create your own image from you collection of inspiration.

8.4 BONUS: Creating your Colour Wheel

Time: 30 minutes

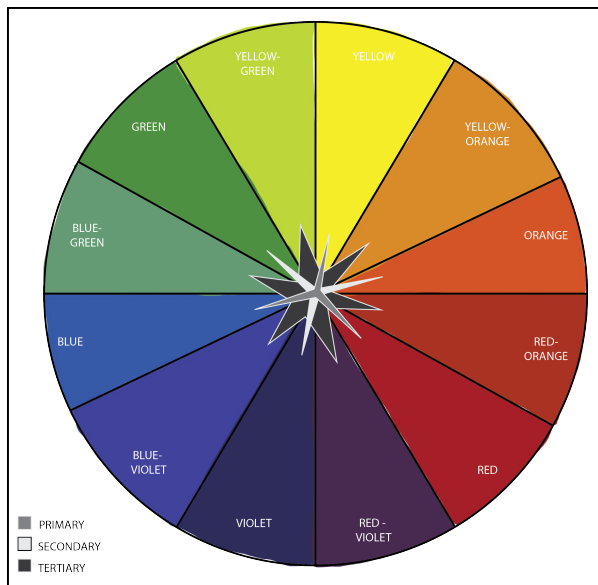
Equipment: Your notebook + pen, the colour wheel Sheet, Paint, Pencils etc.

Colours, tones, values, tints, hues.

I have a vague recollection of these from art class at school and I am definitely not going to be going through all the precise and correct technical terms and definitions because a. I don't know how to do that in an easy way and b. I don't believe you need to know the technical uses of each of these terms. I believe art and colour should make you feel happy and good!

However a quick conversation about colour theory can be helpful if you plan your artworks out before actually creating them.

You probably know that there are three primary colours. (red, blue and yellow)



Secondary colours are when you mix two primary colours together (purple, green and orange)

And tertiary colours are made when you mix a primary colour with a secondary colour. (Yellow-orange, Red-orange, Yellow-green, Blue-green, Red-violet and Blue-violet.)

Warm colours are ones we associate with heat - so yellow to red violet

Cool ones we associate with cold - yellow green to violet.

Complimentary colours are those directly opposite on the colour wheel (i.e. yellow + violet compliment so does green + red)

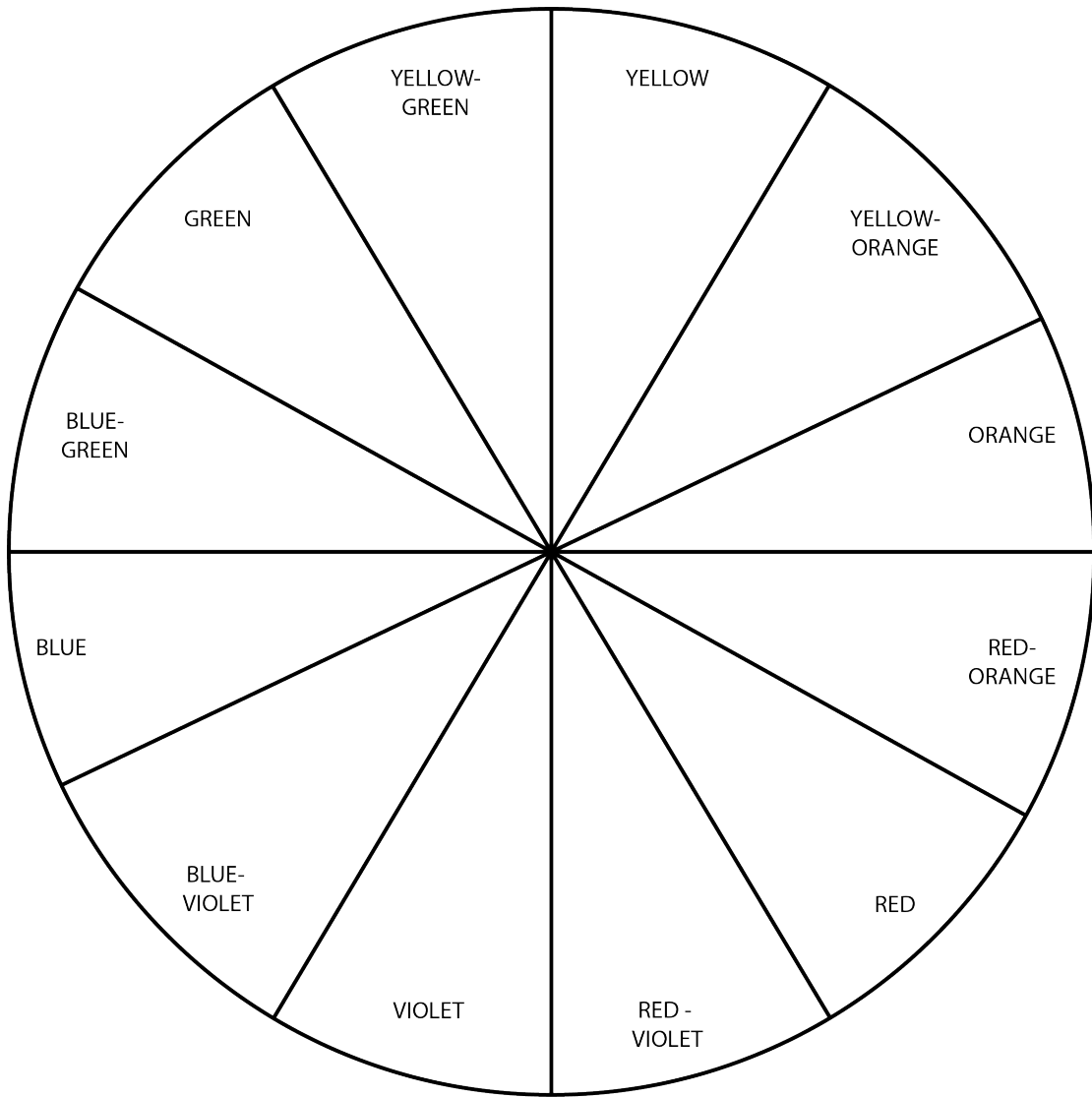
Indirect complimentary colours are ones that are split either side of a complementary colour. (i.e yellow + red violet + blue violet or Blue + yellow orange + Red orange.)

You can change the value of a colour (i.e red) by adding tints (white for a pink shade) or shades (black for a dark red.)

A general rule of thumb: Colours that compliment create harmony in a drawing or painting. If your artworks background was blue something that was complimentary on the colour wheel - such as a red orange barn generally suits better than a green one.

Remember though that all rules in are made to be broken so experiment with your own colour wheels and mixing white and black to create different shades.

Using the Colour wheel sheet at the end of this chapter - create your own colour wheel and discover your favourite colour combinations.



CREATE YOUR COMPLIMENTARY COLOUR PALETTE WITH YOUR FAVOURITE COMBINATIONS

--	--	--

--	--	--