

LOOK AROUND

Free e-book with 8 suggestions for creative exercises

PAPER NAPKINS



MATERIALS

Paper dinner napkins (white or creamy) / Water-based pen / Instant coffee / Water / Iron

METHOD

1. Fold & Stain:

Experiment with various napkin folds and twists. Partially dip napkin edges or sections in the solution and squeeze light.

Dry on a waterproof surface near a radiator (use clean napkins underneath if desired)

2. Iron:

Once dry, iron the napkins to set the stain.

3. Draw:

Using a water-based pen, sketch a simple object on the napkins (experiment with scale and folds).

4. Water & Layer:

Apply varying amounts of water to the drawings. Press a clean napkin underneath to transfer the pattern, then dry near the radiator.

Separate layers, iron again, and arrange to explore the final effects.

DAMAGED ITEMS



MATERIALS

Damaged household items (or items you don't mind further damaging; e.g. old flip-flops, torn socks) / Movable side light / Mobile phone camera

METHOD

- 1. Prepare the Item.** Select an item of little value that you are willing to further damage (by cutting, tearing, bending, etc.).
- 2. Set Up Lighting.** Place the item in a room with closed curtains. Position your side light appropriately.
- 3. Photograph.** Use your phone camera to take a series of quick photographs, experimenting with different arrangements and lighting setups. Work fast and avoid overthinking the compositions.
- 4. Review and Select.** Revisit the photos later with fresh eyes. Delete compositions that don't work and keep the most interesting series.

Optionally, print the selected images to inspire a drawing.

OLD CLOTHES



MATERIALS:

Old clothing items (socks, shirts, tights, etc.) / white paint/paper and ink (for the follow-up exercise)

METHOD

- 1. Prepare and Paint.** Begin by applying white paint evenly to one side of each clothing item. Allow the painted side to dry completely before turning the item over to paint the other side.
- 2. Transform by Crumpling.** Once the clothing is fully dry, gently crumple the item. As you manipulate the fabric, pay attention to how the shapes and textures evolve. Notice the emerging patterns, creases, and contours created by the crumpling process.
- 3. Embrace Intuition.** Work quickly and intuitively. Rather than imposing a pre-conceived idea, let the evolving shapes guide your creative decisions. Stay attentive to the natural forms that emerge, allowing the material to lead you toward unexpected directions.
- 4. Inspire Further Creativity.** Use the shapes and textures you have created as inspiration for a next exercise with paper and ink.

INK & PAPER



MATERIALS

Ink / Water / Paper / Brush

METHOD

- 1. Work quickly.** Start by observing the sculptural shapes from your previous exercise.
- 2. Prepare the surface.** Use your hands to pour water onto the paper, then spread it roughly with a brush to form the general shape of the sculpture.
- 3. Apply ink.** Dip your brush into the ink and, without hesitation, touch the wet area briefly, then lift the brush off immediately. Watch how the ink spreads and travels.
- 4. Minimal interference.** Limit yourself to touching the surface no more than twice.
- 5. Encourage movement.** You can lift and slightly tilt the paper to guide the ink in different directions, but avoid overworking it.
- 6. Step back.** Let the ink and water dry before evaluating your results.
- 7. Create multiples.** Make many quick versions rather than focusing on a single perfect piece.
- 8. Curate your work.** The next day, select the most successful pieces and arrange them into a series.

MULTIPLY ITEMS



MATERIALS

Any objects you can find in large quantities (e.g., leaves, nails, etc.)

METHOD

- 1. Gather materials.** Collect a large number of the chosen items.
- 2. Work quickly.** Arrange them in different ways, experimenting with direction, repetition, and density.
- 3. Document the process.** Take photos as you go, capturing different arrangements. Try spreading the items thinly or clustering them tightly.
- 4. Play with lighting.** Experiment with light angles and shadows while photographing.
- 5. Step away.** Leave the setup and review your photos the next day or later.
- 6. Evaluate & refine.** Identify the most effective compositions and use them as still life references for your drawings or paintings.

LIGHT & SHADOW



MATERIALS

Sketchbook / Phone camera

METHOD

- 1. Observe the light.** Pay attention to how light moves through your house or workspace throughout the day.
- 2. Find the best time.** Notice when and where the light enters most strongly.
- 3. Experiment.** Place your artworks on the wall where the light hits.
- 4. Document the effect.** Take photos, or create quick sketches or paintings of your artwork with the light on it.
- 5. Explore variations.** Try different placements and angles to see how the light interacts with your work.
- 6. Evaluate** The next day, select the most successful pieces and print them. Use them to create a series of drawings on light and shadow.

MOVEMENT AROUND YOU



MATERIAL

Phone camera

METHOD

- 1. Find movement.** Look for objects or elements in your environment that moves, such as running water, a record player, a rocking chair, a pet, etc.
- 2. Observe.** Spend 5 minutes watching from a distance. Spend 15 minutes observing closely. Pay attention to speed, rhythm, spaces, sounds, and how light and shadow interact with the movement.
- 3. Record.** Take 1-minute videos from very close. Experiment with moving the camera, then keeping it still. Capture different angles.
- 4. Pause.** Leave the recorded videos for another day before reviewing them.
- 5. Select & draw.** Choose two videos to focus on.

Do a few 10 minute drawing sessions while watching the videos on a loop. Move your pencil or pen in response to the movement in the video.

TIP: Don't look at the paper but focus only on the video while drawing.