Mixtape: Art Journal Prompts with CBTV

Chapter 1 - Mixtape: Art Journal Prompts

Opening stats

- Okay, I am so excited because it's the first day and we're gonna get into our journal. I'm using a Strathmore Mixed Media Journal and I love it because you can use all different types of medium. You can use watercolors, cray-pens, glues, everything. I'm gonna tear this thing off. We do not need that. And because I have, like, extreme fear of the first page, I always make sure that it is a low-pressure page. And also, because I use it to document my life, I like to just have, like, quick stats about me. I have some collage fodder here. Just have a page that I love that I was drawn to. And since this is gonna be Lauren and my journal, I've got a photo of Lauren and I. And I like to use candid photos here. Instax photos are great. Passport photos are awesome at it. And then we just glue it down. I am using a Tombow tape runner for this and I like using this because it's not a lot of mess. I know that, I mean, like mediums and Mod Podge and all that stuff gives you a lot more flexibility, but this is no mess. So I am just placing wherever I feel like. Hmm. Just playing around with a composition. That looks good. This is actually a photo of Lauren and I that I printed out on my HP Sprocket printer. It's the same as any other instant camera. Sometimes something that really helps me to make sure that I get the composition that I want before sticking it down is I just take a photo with my phone and I can remember it. It seems like very obvious to remember it, but it is not obvious. A lot of times, I've completely forgotten and just ended up with a whole new composition. Okay, once I have the main elements down, I'm just gonna put down our names, basic stats like age, location, and our current life status. This pen is a Pilot G-Tec C4. I love it 'cause it's really thin. And we are in San Francisco. Okay. And then I think I'm going to use one of these stickers just to finish it off. And there we go. So the first page really doesn't need to have a lot of pressure. Just put something down there just to get you started.

Find your go-to shapes

Add ink and doodles to your collage

- This is a good base for us to start really kind of doodling and having some fun. I'm also going to though use some of the liquid text ink that I talked about last week. If you look at some of my older pages, you'll see that I have some ink splotches on them. And this is how I achieve that. I do it before I doodle. I hold my eyedropper of the ink well above the page and let it fall and then drip it a couple times in the same spot and it splashes all over the place. Makes a really nice effect. And I might do that one more spot, just like so. With these ink splotches, sometimes I like to manipulate them a little bit around the page. So I'm gonna tip the one side of my journal and make the one splotch run to the side. And in doing so, the other one's starting to run too. So I'm gonna kind of try to hold that page up a little bit so it doesn't run as much. But okay, that's about as far as we're gonna go, I guess. If you get a drop of the ink in the middle of your book and you're concerned about it bleeding through to other pages, you can just take some paper towel and soak it up. And don't worry about how it looks. We can doodle over it. I'm gonna start outlining a couple of my photo elements with the STABILO ALL pencil because it just kind of gives almost like a shadowy kind of effect. And this way too, your elements don't look like they're just sitting on top of the page.

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They become the page, maybe kind of pencil over a little bit of the photo as you're outlining it. There's no real rhyme or reason to this. You just wanna get an outline around it. Then just gonna wet the tip of my finger here and then I'm gonna just smear it along the outline. And the great thing about this is that it kind of creates almost like a drop shadow effect. Don't worry if you smear over the photo. In fact, you want a little bit of the STABILO onto the photo just because it will kind of all blend in together, make it look less like a piece of collage. So I'm gonna also do that on this piece over here. Gonna wet the tip of my finger again, and I'm just gonna smear it along that piece. And if you got too much water on your finger, don't worry. You can always wipe off that excess with a paper towel or just leave it even, because I think it looks really cool actually. And now we're gonna start to doodle. Lately I seem to be really obsessed with the painter's pens by Elmer's. I'm just gonna start with some of my go-to shapes on this page just to get going. 'Cause that's what it's all about.

Create a word map
- Today's prompt is really simple to do, but it's a great jumping off point for any creative project. We are gonna be making word maps. All you need is a pen, paper, and a word or concept. For my word map, I picked the word map. Usually before any project, I like to look up the word or the concept that I am interested in. So first I went to the dictionary and wrote down the definition of the word map. And then I also wrote down a list of synonyms. So usually I start with the word or concept in the middle of the page and then put a circle around it because that's our focal point. And then anything that stems away from it, I can start to add, some of the words that I really liked from the definitions and also the synonyms were chart, diagram record. I also love connect, which is sort of like link. I also start to think about what these words start to bring up for me too, and then I can continue to keep going. So for chart, I start to think of lists. For record, I think of either record or record. So I think of maybe ephemera, I think vintage. For connect. Hmm, I think dots. I think trail, path. I'm looking back at the definition, and I really like this idea of relationships between objects and also this idea of something that's real or imaginary. So it's a visual representation, real or imaginary. So I might put some of those words on there and see maybe where I can get from there. So first I'm gonna say, so then I think of space. I think attention. I somehow think of pathways over here too. And then, ooh, representation, visual representation. That's a big guy. Because then there are these two different worlds, real or imagined. I feel like then I could have a list coming off of each of these and what they feel like, I'm running outta paper. So now that we've made this map, you might be wondering what do we do with it? Or how can we use that to make new art? I think sometimes what I like to do is look at some of the things that stood out to me the most, or the things that I'm most interested in, and see if those are different from what I assumed the word or the concept meant in the beginning. So I might have one idea of what I thought a map looked like, but now maybe it should look like a chart or I've been doing a lot of grids, but maybe it should look like a diagram or even an old record of something. The goal in doing this is really to give yourself multiple ways into an idea.

Appreciate the kindness of strangers
- Have you noticed how often someone holds the door for you? Lets you go first in line? Holds the traffic just so you can make a left turn? I'm always grateful for the kindness of strangers and always eager to pay it forward. I'm gonna just add patches of color for this background because I'm not blending my colors. A little bit of natural blending always happens, but I'm not vigorously trying to

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blend a blue with a yellow. So that allows me to use a lot of different colors and mix warm and cool colors together without making a muddy brown. I use a flat brush for this kind of patchwork because it's much easier to get that square-ish feel with it, which would be harder to get with the round brush. The title and the journaling for this page are one and the same. I'm using a soft brush pen here. You could use paint and brush as well. I think I'm gonna give a little bit of an antenna to my K, just so I can connect them. Same on this side. And let's make a few marks. And let's complete our T here. Let's dress up our letters a little more. I'm just bringing in a white gel pen. Just small touches. Sometimes pens have a hard time traveling over other inks and paint. Just take your time. I think, I'm gonna leave the lettering at that and just add a few doodles. Like very organic, under the sea botanical, seaweed kind of. And that's just my favorite thing to draw. You can draw whatever you like best. Because we rarely get a chance to thank strangers who help us, or return the favor because we may never meet them again, I always try to do it for someone else. Let's always remember to pay it forward.

Word progression
- Word progression is the second writing exercise in our practice. We'll start by taking two very different words and bridge the space between them. We'll explore how to make connections where there seem to be none. The way we start this writing prompt is put four very different words in each of the four corners. So I started with cardiac arrest, mountain, despair, and ballerina. Then from the bottom, you would work your way to the center line. From the top, you work your way down to the center line. So we can kind of work through, you know, one of them. Cardiac arrest is the first thought that I had. And then from that, I'm working my way, kind of, incrementally down the page to see where I get before I hit the center. So from cardiac arrest, I thought of heart, and then I thought of pumping, like blood. And then I thought of movement because I thought of the pumping blood was moving. From movement, though, my brain went to walking. And from walking, it went to forest. From forest to trees, trees to green, and growing, and then to food. So from cardiac arrest, I got all the way to food in what, maybe eight steps. Continue to do this through your four words. You know, mountain, somehow I got all the way to answer. From despair, I got to blur. And then from ballerina, oddly enough, I got to learning. And you could stop here, really, and use this as possible inspiration for other writing or poetry. But what was really interesting is what you could do next is take then the quadrant, like the top or the bottom, and use the four words in a sentence like use despair, blur, learning, and ballerina, so like the four points of where you got to. Just as an example, these were my words with all my little cross out. For despair, ballerina, blur, and learning, my sentence was, "Despair in its center can be a blur, like a ballerina first learning to spin." And then for the second one, my four words are cardiac arrest, food, answer, and mountain. And my sentence is, "Who knows what the answer is, standing on this mountain, asking for sustenance like food or blood pumping after cardiac arrest." I found this prompt really fun and quite illuminating because one, I never would've written a sentence like this on my own. And I never would've put together these different images just by thinking of them. I never would've gotten ballerina in the same world as despair or as learning. Practices like this help develop your creative thinking and writing.

Family journal example
- So this book came about because I was looking through all of our photo albums we had, which are beautiful and fun to make, but they just didn't have the every day in 'em. They had a lot of birthdays, they had a lot of holidays, but they didn't have things that I thought were really important

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to keep. Things that maybe actually drive me crazy, like things that I want to maybe sometimes forget actually. But in 20 years I'll want to remember them. And what I've done here is I've just put on a piece of decorative paper and printed out a label to put on. And I actually am gonna have these labels available as a PDF for you to print. This photograph is really special. This was in our first house. It was drawn by Sadie, and I've labeled it here. And labeling is so important because we forget. And also in years to come, they'll want to know who drew this. So this is a different type of item I've documented. And whenever anyone says anything, we quickly want to write down, we put it on a quote page. Sadie says here, I'm going to be an artist when I grow up. Then Delia says, I'm not going to be anything. I'm just going to grow. This is another sheet of quotes from Liddy, and these are really special because she was the youngest. She is the youngest. And so she didn't talk like a baby for very long. She very quickly started using words that were correct, but for a while there she had her own little way of saying things. So Grammy was Bammy and Graham cracker was bam tacker. And chips were pips, coffee cake, puffy cake, and slipper was flipper and mama's sleeping was mama feeping. She's a feep. And this is so sweet to read because I had forgotten that she did this. And it actually makes me really emotional because this was only a few months that she used this little language. And also Pete wrote this down. And so this is his handwriting, and I'm kind of a nut about handwriting. I think it's really special. And so this is a great way to document handwriting and special words that you don't hear anymore. And again, you think you're gonna remember and you don't. So this is a drawing of Liddy. And again, these early drawings don't last very long before they start to get a lot more developed. And I've written a label here, Liddy 3.5. So three and a half years old. We think it's horses and a potty that just speaks for itself I think. This photo is from my middle child's first birthday, and this was gingerbread cake that I made from scratch, and she ate it and crawled away after taking off her sock. So I have here after Delia's first birthday. This is her gingerbread cake and her sock. And I've just used tape on here, and this is one of my favorite photos from her first birthday. I have about 20 photos of her opening gifts and of all of our family being around her. But this really captures the moment in a really special way. This is just an example of different things you can put in this book. And I've shown you photos, I've shown you cards, I've shown you quotes. The point is to make it meaningful for you. But what I don't want is for you to feel like this is a project that you have to feel guilty about, that you have to keep up with, that you have to do weekly or monthly or even yearly. This is up to you. You can do it once a year. You can do it every day. So this is sort of messy and wonderful and unorganized and real. It's as real as our life is. So use it that way, not as something to aspire to make look perfect. This is just everyday stuff.

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