



TEAM *of* ART

EXERCISES ON HOW TO EVOKE CREATIVITY

General Objective

The aim of this practical sheet is to present different types of exercises which will help creators of art workshops evoke creativity.

In this practical sheet, you will:

- ✓ Learn more about exercises that can help evoke creativity
- ✓ Learn what techniques you can use to boost your inspiration and creativity

What you'll need:

- ✓ Arts and Crafts (Sketchbook, paint, pencil, etc. anything you may use)
- ✓ Paper and a pen
- ✓ Timer (can be on a mobile phone)
- ✓ Laptop / Mobile device with access to the internet

Challenges and issues

Creative play seemed to be easier when we were young. That cardboard box that became a rocket ship or part of a robot costume, for instance. Children are used to looking at objects and deciding or thinking creatively what these objects can be, instead of facing the object's true value. As adults, once more experience with criticism and feedback is gained, we become less open to



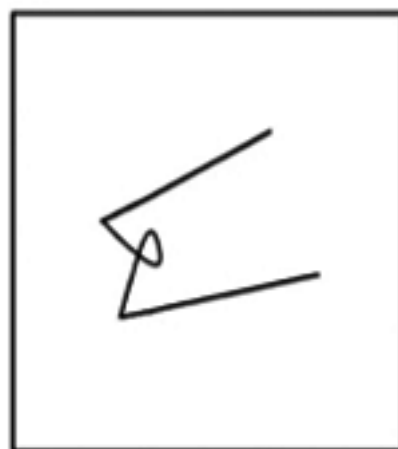
playful and creative thinking. Artists, tend to rely on their creativity to keep pushing them forward and to make them satisfied with their work. However, there are times that artists call “creative block” when the inspiration for a new piece of art or to finish an already on the easer piece, is simply not there.

Some might think that an artists’ creativity begins and ends at the easer, however others may argue that artistic breakthroughs also happen when one is nowhere near paint or a brush. Here we present some creative exercises, several inspired by the work and words of Jane Dunnewold in her book *Creative Strength Training*, that will help with inspiration.

Adaptation

1. Complete the Incomplete Figure Test

A classic test of creativity, the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking was introduced by psychologist Ellis Paul Torrance in the sixties as a way to administer a more creatively inclined IQ test. Respondents were given images like the ones below and asked to finish the picture. However, this test has been also proven to allow artists to start somewhere a new piece and to give them a starting point for their artwork.



2. Complete the Picture

This quick exercise dubbed "The Doodle Dandy," was found on How Design, and is similar to the Incomplete Figure Test, but has room for more variations. It's basically the same principle as the first exercise, except you prepare a stack of simple one-line scribbles and a stack of short phrases and you must create the phrase from one of the doodles.

Here is their sample phrase list, though they also encourage you to come up with your own.:

- "Happy as a clam"
- "I can't get no satisfaction"
- "Where in the world?"
- "A hard day's night"
- "Human nature"
- "The art of noise"



"Here comes trouble" by Justin

3. Look away from what you are creating

Try out **this direct observation technique** from marketing and creative coach **Mark McGuinness**. The goal of the exercise is to work on drawing what you really see, instead of what you think you see.

Here is the gist: grab a pencil, some paper and give yourself five minutes. However, instead of looking at the page while you are drawing, turn around, hold up your hand and look only at your hand while drawing, NOT the paper.

Your aim is to draw the creases, folds, and marks of your hand and not your entire hand. Oh, and you also can't pick up your pencil for the entire five minutes.

Even though it was a challenge not to peek the entire time, and everyone felt a little silly, it was a great exercise to loosen up and focus on process and seeing, instead of simply end results.

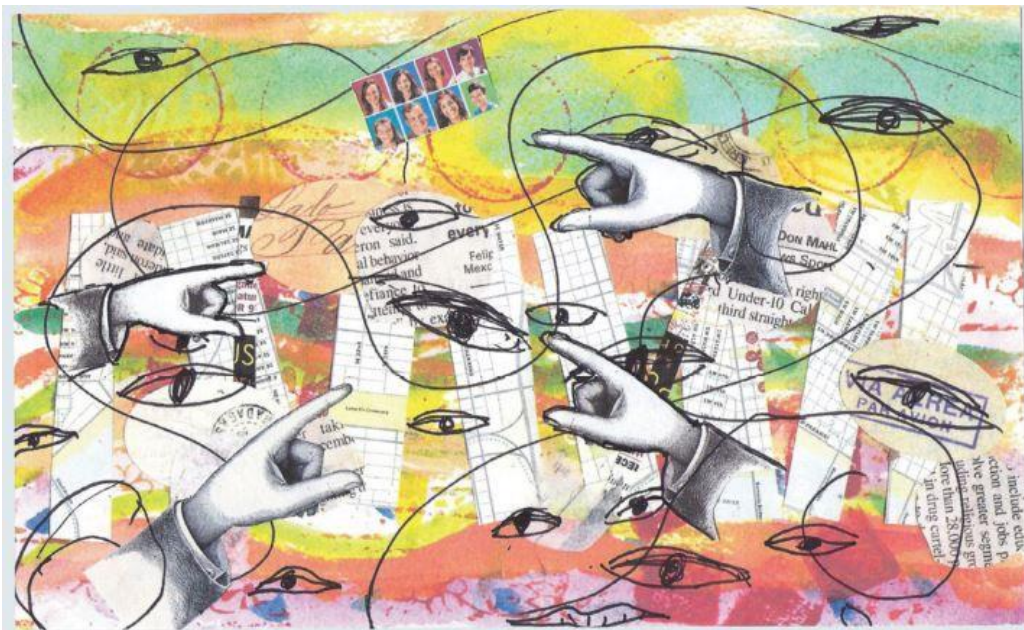
4. Scavenger Hunt

Jane's book, *Creative Strength Training*, suggests that the scavenger hunt approach is very helpful to evoke creativity. The suggested process is as follows:

- Write a word (you choose the boundaries) at the top of a page of paper
- Set the time for two minutes
- Write down whatever words come to mind during that time. Do not edit them, just write as this will produce a wealth of raw material, words that are already visual images and words with potential to take content deeper.
- Move to the acquisition of images based on the free-association list and where you take these association, is up to you. The process of "mining for meaning" has begun.

5. Don't watch the clock

An enemy of creativity is stress and feeling pressure. Looking at the clock and the time might bring these emotions on you. Also, because you may overthink the amount of time you spend on the creation of the artwork. Try to not look at the time with any creative project or piece of art you set out to create. If you have a certain time frame, rather set a timer.



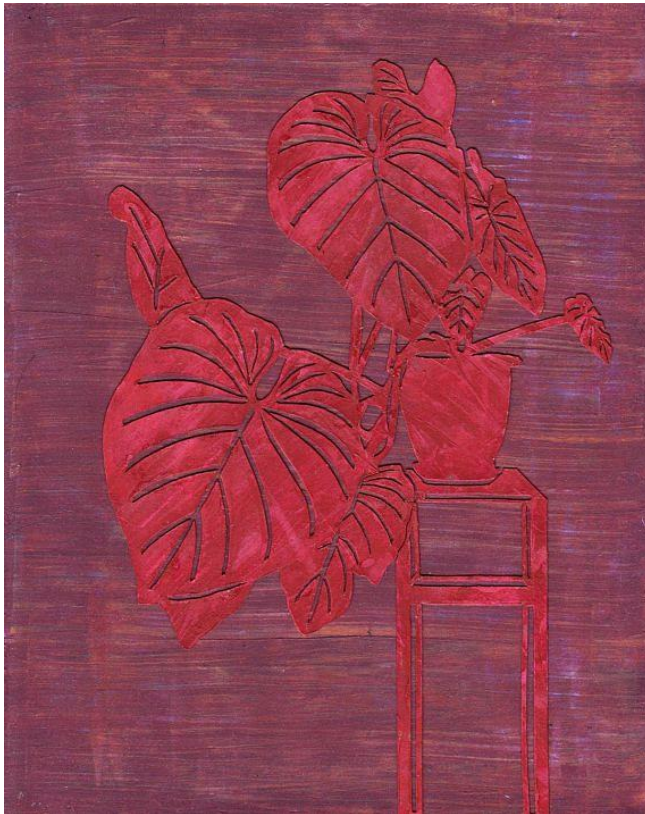
Committee by Pippa Drew, 5" × 8" (12cm × 20cm) Black marker on inkjet print

6. Mix your media

This is an advice that has been very well known by many artists. It is the saying that the more you experiment, the more creative paths this will open for you. Even if you are not aware of where to start, simply start with collaged paper. Cut out words perhaps, to make it a Pop-art punch, try different texture, use your fingertips, and see what happens. Watercolor and paster are a great combination if you have them on hand. Release your creativity, regardless of the outcome!

7. Monochrome it!

Take a color (of your choice) and make a list of places, people, objects and anything else you would like to include that fits in your color category. Scour the internet for inspirations in the colour of your choice. Once you have an overload of objects, people, etc. from the colour of your choice, make a painting with just that color and nothing else. Include the objects you have listed or qualities of them, like their textures or outlines. You can also simply paint a scene or object in monochrome. Make it a blue and only blue still life of a dish-filled sink or a red potted plant next to a red couch. Make the color dimensional, play with pattern and marks and most definitely use several different brushes or size pens and markers to add even more variety.



Anna Polashenski of [Crimson Crow Paintings](#) makes gouache and collage artworks.

8. Three times is the charm

Take an idea and sketch it three ways. Make the choice of a color more involved by trying three different hues out first. Paint a still life only after positioning and repositioning the objects differently three times or keep them where they are and paint the same composition differently — inspired by Cubism, Impressionism, and Abstract Expressionism for example. What can become clear after awhile is that you don't have to stop at just three. So make it four, make it 10. Keep pushing your vision and it will rise to the occasion every time.



Photo by 童彤 on Unsplash

9. Turn Your World Upside-Down

One way to shake things up is to literally turn your world (or drawing) upside-down, suggests Lori McNee of Fine Art Tips.

Lori tasks you with finding a picture of a person's face, turning it upside-down, and then drawing it that way. She says to “forget that you are drawing a



human face; instead concentrate on the shapes, lines, angles, and patches of light and dark.”

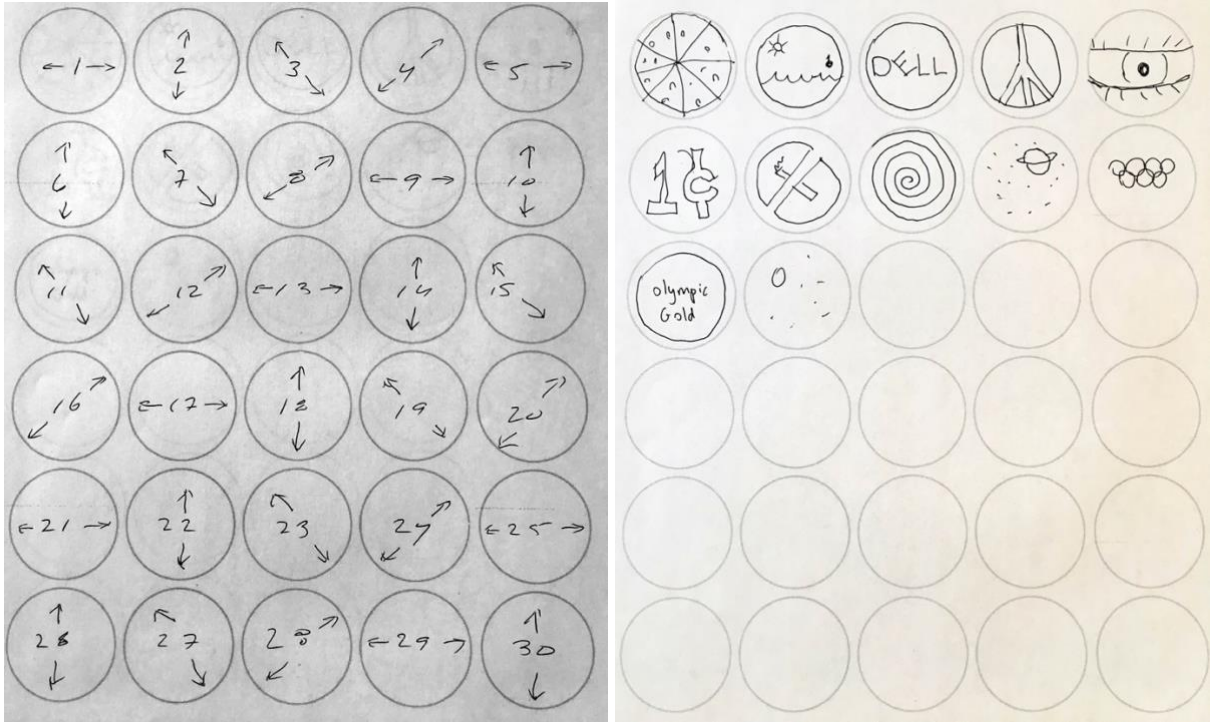
Based on concepts from Betty Edward’s book *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, this exercise is used to strip us of our conditioned perspective to look for recognizable features that make up the face. Instead of seeing, “oh this is where the nose is supposed to go, this is the place for the eyes,” we begin to see the face for how it actually and can begin to draw more realistically.

10. Concentrate on Quantity

Tim Brown’s amazing 2008 TEDTalk *Tales of Creativity in Play* talks about this next exercise. Created by Bob McKim of the Stanford Design Program, the 30 circles exercise is simple in practice and quick to complete.

Each participant is given a piece of paper with 30 blank circles on it, a pencil and 3 minutes on the clock. You are challenged to fill in as many circles as possible- with the aim being quantity, not quality. Maybe all your circles are variations on a theme, perhaps they are all emojis ... your one goal was to fill out as many as possible.

Then, after the exercise, share and reflect what similarities there were and encourage collaboration. The motive behind the 30 circles is to stop yourself from self-censoring. When you go for quantity, you don't have time to think your idea is bad, you can edit later. This is the stage where creativity flourishes.



Concentrate on quantity

11. Make Treasure out of Trash

As adults, we see objects for their intended purpose. We are past seeing the cardboard box like a rocket ship, but what if all those credit card offers, coupons, and junk mail could become something other than junk mail. What if instead of sitting there in a pile to be recycled, you asked, "What else can I do with this?"

Free your imagination, so you can evoke creativity and inspiration!



Practical examples and inspiration

How to Have Great Ideas: A Guide to Creative Thinking by John Ingledew

<https://www.amazon.com/How-Have-Great-Ideas-Creative/dp/1780677294>

How Does Art Viewing Inspires Creativity?

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343866271_How_Does_Art_Viewing_Inspires_Creativity

10 Tips to Get Over a Creativity Burnout and Boost Artistic Inspiration

<https://feltmagnet.com/artist-corner/how-to-find-artistic-inspiration>

Additional resources

Everything You Need to Know About Creativity in the Art Room

<https://theartofeducation.edu/2018/06/06/everything-you-need-to-know-about-creativity-in-the-art-room/>

Developing creative thinking skills through art

<https://www.naac.org/blog/developing-creative-thinking-skills-through-art-0>

How To Inspire Creativity When You Aren't Necessarily Artistic

<http://theglitterguide.com/2020/07/16/how-to-inspire-creativity-when-you-arent-necessarily-artistic/>