

ARTELLA MAE'S NEW ALTERED ANCESTORS!



my sister artella

50 Techniques for Using
Vintage Photos in Art

Who is Artella Mae?

This is not a question with one single answer. To tell you about Artella Mae, I must provide a bit of history.

In October of 2002, I founded an art and literary zine called Artella ~ the waltz of words and art. The focus of the publication would be to publish works in which both words and art played an equal role, with an emphasis on fostering collaborations among writers and artists. The name, Artella, comes from "art" and "telling".

In the past year and a half, Artella has grown to be more than a zine...now it is a full-fledged support network for writers, artists, and creative people. Our new Web site, www.artellaland.com, is a creative playground that strives to serve unmet needs of creative people and ignite the Muse within.

Not too far into this venture, I was visiting my mother and we were having one of our typical late-night laughing sessions. We were playing with a little baby doll, giving her a funny voice and stuffing paintbrushes and pencils in her little hands. We called her "Artella Mae", since she seemed to represent the spunky waltz of words and art that was behind the concept of Artella.

But that was just the beginning.

Artella Mae made an a subtle appearance in issue 3 of Artella, the theme of which was "passion: art to heart". In the place of a regular "Editor's Notes", I handwrote a love letter to the readers, and signed it "Miss Artella Mae Editor". Artella "fans" began thinking of Artella Mae as the Muse behind Artella.

We talked about her on the ArtellaVision community board, seeing her as the wise Mother Spirit who could always guide us in the right directions. ArtellaVision member Gretchen Little wrote a beautiful Christmas poem about Artella Mae, a Goddess/Muse, which was later illustrated by Anita Eliason and published in e-Artella #e-5.

But, as in all good stories, this tale has a twist. At some point during this journey, my mother emailed me with a surprise. Apparently I had a great-aunt (my maternal grandfather's sister) whom I had never known or even heard of. Her name...was Ardella Mae.

I shared this with the ArtellaVision community. Was it coincidence? Had I been "channeling" the original, Ardella Mae? We had lots of laughs and lots of goosebumps writing back and forth about this spirit who seemed to be watching over us.

Artella Mae was becoming more and more real to more and more people.

The next twist came when my mother was going through her father's photographs (incidentally, she was looking for photographs to use for altered art projects!) She came upon this photo (right) marked, "My sister Ardella, 1924".

My mother scanned the photo and emailed it to me, and I was stunned when I looked and




the photo and thought I was looking right at myself. Even through the haze and blur of the old photo, I saw myself in her.

Artella Mae's most recent presence is the new acronym for the administrative side of running Artella.... Make All Easy. Sigh. Artella Mae seems to know what she is talking about.

Whoever Artella Mae is, and however her spirit found the way into so many hearts and imaginations, I know that she's happy to be the benefactor behind the robust romp with vintage photographs that you are about to enter! As the quintessential "altered ancestor", she is the perfect presence to oversee your artistic adventure.



What is inside this eBook?



This eBook contains hundreds of tips and ideas for using old photographs in art-work, broken down into 50 specific techniques. There's something in this book for everyone - from long-time experienced artists to those just starting to play with their creativity. Old photographs, with their hidden stories and graceful secrets, offer inspiration to us all. I believe this is true whether we are working with genuine photos of our true ancestors, or our "borrowed ancestors" (i.e., the folks in the photos we find in thrift stores, collage packs, or on eBay).

Please feel free to use this book in any way you would like. Read it on your computer, or print it out, or bring it in your studio and spill paint all over it. Most importantly, pass it on to your friends - beginning and experienced artists alike - and invite them to visit Artella's online playground at www.artellaland.com to join in our many diverse creative offerings.

A few technical notes:

- Blue underlined signify links, either to destinations within this eBook or to Internet Web sites
- Make use of the features of Acrobat Reader/Adobe Reader to zoom in and out, scroll, and search for items in the book.
- It is ALWAYS a good idea to make multiple copies of photographs and never alter the original unless you are prepared to delete it from your family collection. In this eBook, the terms "photo", "photograph", "image", and "picture" are used interchangeably to refer to the particular image with which you are working - be it an original photo or any kind of copy.
- If you are concerned with archival quality (i.e., the ability for an artistically-treated pho-

tograph to last for years and years), be sure to check the archival notations on the specific products you use.

- The instructions for the projects enclosed have come from a wide variety of sources. As always, art involves much trial and error, and neither Artella Mae nor I can guarantee your personal results when following our suggestions.

I'm deeply grateful for the artists who have generously contributed their art to these pages: Donna Cartagena, Melissa Chapin, Deana David, Jolene Elliott, Karyn Gartel, Arthiss Kliever, Paula Peters Marra, Lori Musser, Deb Silva, Rebecca Trawick, and Kathy Welsh. Please take a look at their bios and contact information so that you can see more of their beautiful artwork.

If YOU have any ideas to share, I have the feeling that Artella Mae has not said her last words on the topic of altered ancestors. I'd love to read your ideas...email to customer-service@artellaland.com

On behalf of Artella Mae, the snazzy, jazzy Aunt to us all, I hope that this eBook gives you a greater sense of what is possible when we connect our life's legacy with the waltz of words and art!

~alteringly yours,



Marney K. Makridakis
Founder/Editor

[Artella ~ the waltz of words and art](#)



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Marney K. Makridakis
eBook Editor

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Antiquing

Though it sounds rather ironic, antiquing old photos can enhance their aesthetic appeal when used as part of a larger piece of artwork. This is especially true if you copy an original photo, or print it on a computer printer. Even an old photo can look "new" when it is printed on glossy paper or cardstock.

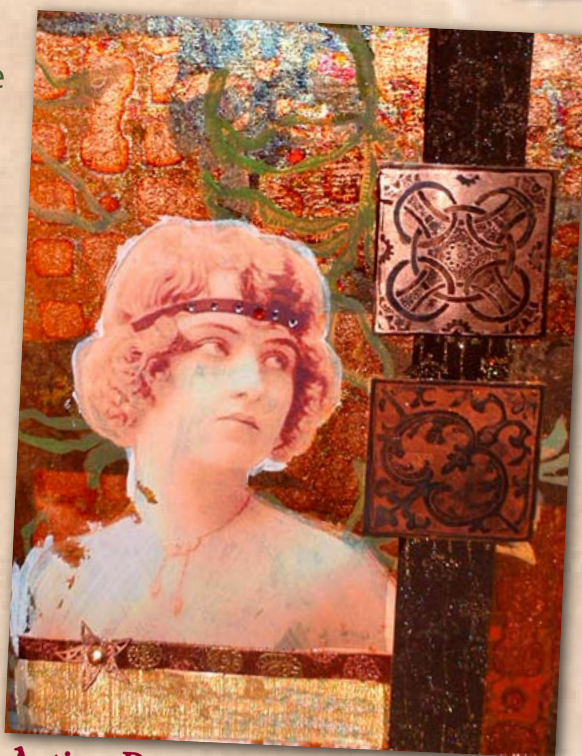
The goal in antiquing a photo is simple - to make it look rough and old. Some antiquing techniques include:

- Scratching the photo with a nail, dried-out pen, or brillo pad
- Peeling part of the photo back
- Burning edges of the photo
- Painting over the photo with thinned paint (either thinned with water, or mixed with glaze medium), or with wood stain, and then wiping off excess paint
- Using ink pads directly on a glossy photo surface, and blending with a cosmetic sponge. Depending on the look you want, you can use ink pads in brown, rust, yellow, or gray colors.

In the example shown here, the image was cut out from the photo and antiqued by sponging gray ink (from a dye ink pad) directly on the photo. A comb was used to create some textural lines in the ink to complete the aged effect.

The image was adhered to matboard that had been previously treated with gold leafing and parts of the image have been peeled back to further add to the aged, antiqued look. The photo image is balanced with two medallions created with copper etching placed on a vertical ribbon. Metal findings and gemstones further accent the composition.

The juxtaposition of the antiqued, worn image and the majestic background/accents makes the composition visually striking and intriguing.



Artist: Deana David

Assemblage



Artist: Lori Musser

Using an old photo as a the basis for an assemblage ("A sculptural composition consisting of an arrangement of miscellaneous objects or found materials" - American Heritage Dictionary) is a wonderful way to preserve memories and tell narrative stories in an engaging, tangible three-dimensional format.

Generally, assemblages are nested inside some sort of structure, such as the following:

- Lampshade
- Canister
- Tray
- Curio box
- Grid
- Hatbox
- Structure built with toy blocks
- Cup or glass
- Plate
- Triptych frames
- Toiletry box
- Cabinet
- Candle holder
- CD or cassette holder
- Cigar box
- Altoid tin
- Box lid
- Clock frame
- Picture frame
- Shadow box
- Recipe box (see example)
- Basket
- Jewelry box
- Embellished shoe or photo box
- Jar
- Pill box
- Small shelf
- Small trunk or suitcase

In this example, the lid of a recipe card box was painted with acrylics and weathered. A photocopy of the photograph was cropped to fit in the box. The photo was stamped with a hand carved rubber stamp in gold ink, and embossed with gold powder.

After the picture was adhered, the other pieces of the assemblage were adhered with acrylic medium: the butterfly, sheet music, dried moss, and small plastic eggs.

To add additional texture and age, melted wax was colored with herbs and drizzled over the entire composition.

No matter how you present photographs in your art - whether it is on a page or canvas, placed in a frame, or mounted on some other piece, a wonderful way to create a subtle but stunning frame around the image is to make a frame made of small beads.



Beads are a great way to add texture and interest to a two-dimensional work on paper. To add beads to paper, you can either use a dimensional adhesive such as [Diamond Glaze](#), or sew them to the page with a needle or thread.

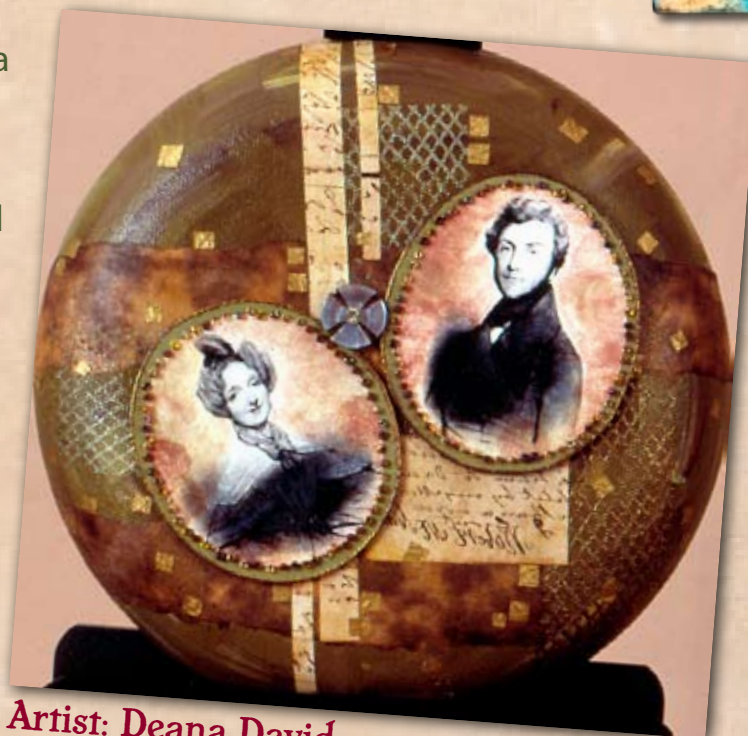
If you are using a photo on a piece matboard, a hard canvas, a shadow box, or another hard surface, you can adhere small beads with a dimensional adhesive.

On canvas or fabric, you can sew beads to the surface with a needle and thread. In the piece shown here, the photos were sewn to pieces of felt, using a bead on each stitch. The beads highlight the images, ensuring that the images themselves are the focal point for the entire piece. The felt pieces were then glued to a wooden tray, which serves as the mounting surface for the entire composition.

The entire surface, including the images themselves, was then brushed with wood stain, to further antique the composition. Collage paper strips and rubber stamps were used to add further decoration to the piece.

In addition to using beads as elements to a frame a particular image, they can also be used effectively by creating strips of solid beads to accent a piece. The easiest way to do this is to place a strong double-sided tape, such as [tacky tape](#), in an area where you would like to create a "band" of beads, and then spread the beads over the tape.

You can create a mysterious aura around a particular image by covering the entire image with double-sided adhesive and then covering the surface with clear micro-beads, which creates an elegant, holographic effect. For this purpose, use adhesive that comes in sheets, rather than strips, to prevent any unwanted lines from showing through the solid covering of micro beads.



Artist: Deana David



[illegible]

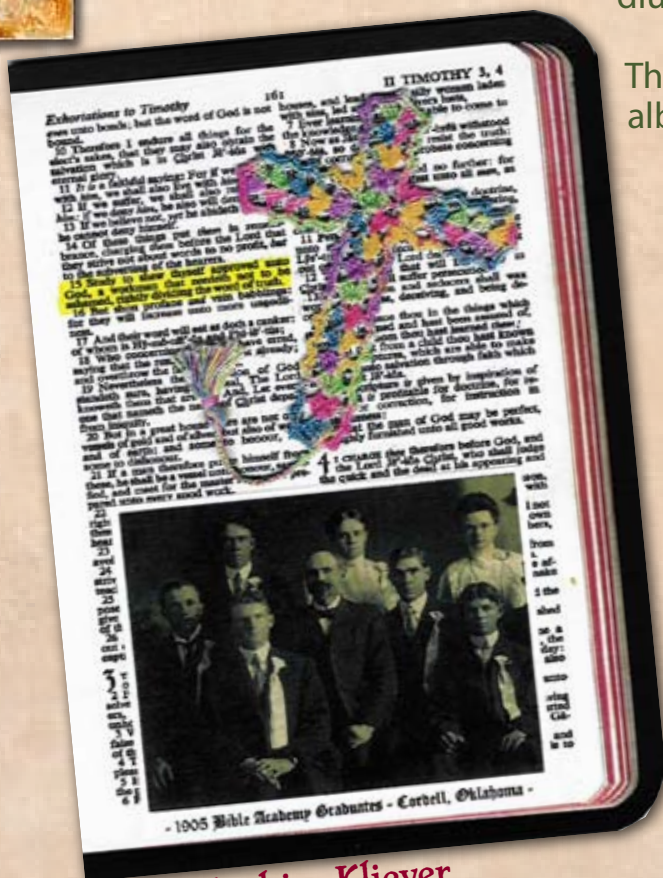
Pages from The Bible can be a powerful background for old photographs. You can treat the page in a variety of ways using altered book techniques, or allow the page to stand as-is, perhaps highlighted a particular verse, as has been done in the example shown here.

In this example, the photo depicts a graduating Bible study class; the highlighted verse is “Study to who thyself approved unto God, a workmak that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

A croqueted bookmark adds a further accent to this composition, which is visually interesting, and also meaningful. When you can use actual, authentic elements from the history of your family or love ones in your artwork, it becomes more than simply a work of art - it becomes a living dialog between you, your ancestors, and all those who see the work.

In the piece shown here, the image was glued directly to the page. However, it also could have been adhered using an image transfer technique, such as gel medium transfer.

This piece can stand alone, be included in an album, or be mounted in a frame or shadow box.



Artist: Arthiss Kliever

Book Pages

Book pages are great backgrounds for compositions that feature old photographs. But you can also use snippets from old books to add both interest and narrative meaning to a composition.

If the photograph is the most important element in your piece, the addition of text from a book should not distract from the power of the main image. In the example shown here, the portion of an old text adds to the soft antiquity of the piece.



Artist: Lori Musser



Bottle Caps

For tiny images (or larger images that you have shrunk down using a copier or printer), the inside of bottle caps make the perfect canvas.

To create these vintage cuties, cut the image to size and adhere inside a bottlecap. If additional elements are desired (such as the tiny words included in the mini-collage shown here), add them at this time.

Next, cover the entire surface inside the bottlecap with a thick coat of [Diamond Glaze](#). Use a toothpick or pin to pop any bubbles in the [Diamond Glaze](#) and then allow to fully dry.

Once complete, the bottlecaps can be used as embellishments on picture frames, cards, and journals. Or display a related set of them in a shadow box.

Here are some examples of other tiny "canvases" that could hold itsy-bitsy photos:



Artist: Donna Cartagena

- pill boxes
- Tic-Tac boxes
- tea light candle cups
- matchboxes (see matchbox shrine, right)
- teabag cannisters
- small vials
- tiny jam jars or lids
- coins
- paperclip or staples boxes
- the "cups" inside artificial flowers
- doll's teacups/saucers
- small rocks and stones



Artist: Kathy Welsh

Buttons

Buttons are a wonderful embellishment for all kinds of surfaces because they can add so much with very little space and, in some cases, very little bulk. You can use them directly on a photograph (such as using them to embellish the subject's attire), or use them to create interest in a larger composition.

In the example shown here, the use of vintage buttons adds to the haunting image, instantly adding both age and grace to the piece. The buttons themselves are intricately carved, which adds even more texture. In this case, the buttons have been sewn into papers that have then been adhered to the frame, but buttons can also be attached using a dimensional adhesive such as [Diamond Glaze](#), or acrylic medium.



Artist: Deana David

The colors of the white and gray shell buttons works well because the hues are echoed in the lilac/white/gray composition. The floral motif on the frame was rubber stamped, and the same theme was stamped in reverse on the collage papers that serve as the piece's background. The image was rendered using a Lazertran transfer.



Nothing conjures up the feeling of family sentimentality like old Christmas cards and holiday greetings.

In the example here (top right), a piece of cardboard was covered with green silk fabric, upon which a collage of a vintage Christmas card, tag, and textured pages in pastel shades was built.

The photograph was scanned and the ribbons in the subject's hair were colored lavender in [Photoshop](#) and then printed with a color printer to effectively match the color scheme of the collage.

Other ways to include Christmas cards in artwork include:

- Superimposing images from photographs into scenes on Christmas cards
- Creating your own text for an old-fashioned holiday greeting, and then add the letter to a collage. Hand-write the message or use an old-fashioned font and antique the letter before adding it to the collage.



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis

- Decoupage images from Christmas cards on a surface, such as the Altoid tin shown here
- Combine photographs and Christmas cards together in a three-dimensional "fan" spread in a shadow box
- Add sheet music for Christmas carols as the background for a collage that combines old photos and Christmas cards

Coil Book



Artist: **Marney K. Makridakis**

For a different kind of memory, book, create an interactive three-panel coil-bound book, such as the one shown here. This book, inspired by artist Michelle Ward's work, consists of cut center panels that open to reveal further and further imagery.

The cover of the book depicts a church, which has been created by aging a photocopy from an old architecture book, and rubber stamping a brick pattern across the cover pages. When opened, each page showcases a wedding photograph, such as those shown.



Artist: **Marney K. Makridakis**

The three panels shown here include copies of wedding photographs, special papers, old watch parts, and rubber stamped images. Binding supplies are from CoilConnection.com.

A portion of this coil book was combined with poetry to create an offering of words and art for a June edition of Artella's former newsletter, Articulation, called [Something About June](http://SomethingAboutJune.com).

A multi-paneled coil book is a great vehicle for connecting photographs into a single narrative. Consider fashioning a coil book in the shape of a tree, to create an interactive family tree, or to build a "house" that holds the secrets of generations.



Cropping Photos

You can create interesting artistic compositions with old photos by cropping them in unusual, unexpected ways.

In the piece shown here, the main photo has been cropped so that only the bodies of the subjects are shown. The "faceless" theme is repeated in the photo that is overlayed in the collage.

This particular technique presents an opportunity for visual interest as well as narrative content.

The viewer is drawn to ask, Why is she faceless? What was not seen or heard? What is represented by these deletions? Why are these people seemingly anonymous?

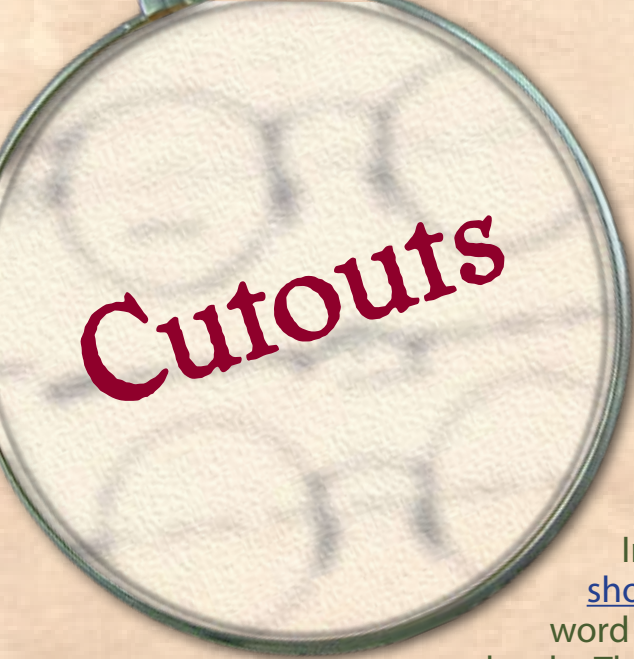
If a family story (either a real one or one conjured by your imagination) has elements of mystery or suspense, you can use the technique of cropping photos to convey a veil of intrigue around the subjects.

Consider cropping out the body parts of subjects and then putting them back together in different ways. Consider exchanging one subject's body parts for another's (i.e., putting a person's head on another person's body).

For an interesting "paper doll" effect, try cutting a body apart and then reconnecting it with ribbon, brads, or wires.



Artist: Rebecca Trawick



An interesting way to add interest to photos is to cut away particular portions of a photograph to reveal another image or background behind the photograph.

In the example shown here, the area behind the window in the image has been cut away. Behind it, a sheet of paper that has been painted with watercolors, shows through.

In this piece, the photograph was colored using [Photo-shop software](#), prior to being cut out. A metal tag with the word "sweetness" is attached to the piece with brass miniature

brads. Thin, fuzzy fibers in colors echoing the watercolor paper hang from each brad.

Consider these ideas for using cutouts in photographs:

- In addition, cut openings in doors to houses or vehicles

- Cut openings in the pockets of the photograph subject's attire, or create a slit where the subject can hold something in his or her hand

- Make several copies of the same photograph to create a pop-up tunnel book. A series of five or six copies of a single photo works well. In the first photo, use an Xacto knife to cut away one element from the photo (i.e., a tree in the background). In the next photo, cut away the tree, and also cut out an additional element.

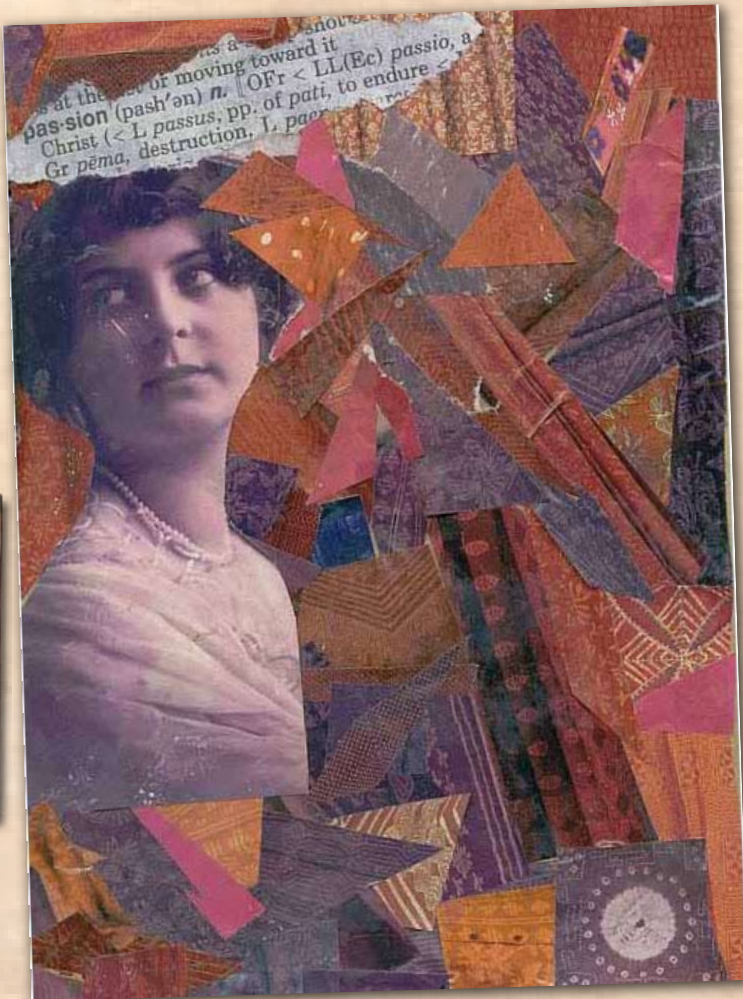
Place that photo on top of the first photo you cut. In the third photo, cut away the first two elements, and then add a third. The top photo will have the most elements cut out, but still some parts of the photo's background remaining. Assemble the photos to create your tunnel book by creating two identical sheets of heavy cardstock, the width of which is equal to the height of the photograph, that have been accordion-folded. Glue the photographs, in the proper order, in the folds of the folded cardstock ends. When complete, you can tie a ribbon around the entire tunnel book to fold the "accordion". When you untie the ribbon, the folds will pop up to reveal the photographs with successive cutouts.



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis



Cut Paper Backgrounds



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis

An easy, interesting way to create a dramatic background on which to place a vintage photo image is to cut random pieces of paper, in different textures and styles, within a pre-determined color scheme. In this collage, which was the basis for the cover of [Artella issue 3](#), passion: art to heart, the vast majority of the strips were cut directly from a clothing catalog, and then adhered to a piece of cardboard with gel medium. The image was cut from a photocopy of a photograph and glued to the cut paper background, and a torn dictionary definition (colored by blotting a dye ink pad directly on the page), tops the composition.

Definitions

An easy way to combine words with images is to use definitions along with photos in artwork. Old dictionary pages create a vintage look and feel, and the text can add a new level of meaning to the overall composition.

In this example shown above left, the definition of the word, "family", has been printed on vellum and placed across the photo and its accompanying collaged papers. The effect is subtle, but visually effective, and also adds meaning to the piece.



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis

In the digitally-created collage on the right, the photo has been laid against a background of definitions (paper by [Seven Gypsies](#)) with a highlighted definition of the word "passion" taking center stage in the middle of the piece. This page was a "section heading" for [Artella issue 3](#), for which the theme was "passion: art to heart". The border around the page is made of tiny cropped views of the different pieces of artwork in that section of the magazine.

Another option is to use definitions from dictionaries in foreign languages to add an additional element of history to the photograph.



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis

Diary Pages



Artist: Arthiss Kliever

If you are lucky enough to have diary or journal entries from your ancestors, they are a wonderful element to add to art compositions. In the art journal shown here, color copies of journal pages, photographs, ration tickets, and an advertisement for the family business flock the pages with history. A photocopy of the actual diary from which the pages are taken is also included. Rubber stamped images and a small three-dimensional clock complete the composition.

Often, the text included in diary entries can inform the kinds of images and/or found objects to be included in a piece. Even a piece torn from a diary page, highlighting just a few words, can create a theme for an entire piece of art.

If you do not have access to actual journal pages from your ancestors, or if you are working with "borrowed relatives", you can make your own journal pages by handwriting or using an old-fashioned font on lined composition paper. You can use a variety of methods to antique the page before adding it to your piece.

All Links are Live! Click to Explore!



Artella's Studio Collage Kits

These gorgeous downloadable [Collage Art Kits](#) are truly an all-in-one, project-ready art studio. They are full of one-of-a-kind elements, but since they are downloadable, you can use them over and over. Plus, everything is coordinating and organized by theme, so you truly have everything you need in one place to create endless projects.

Click on the images to find out more !

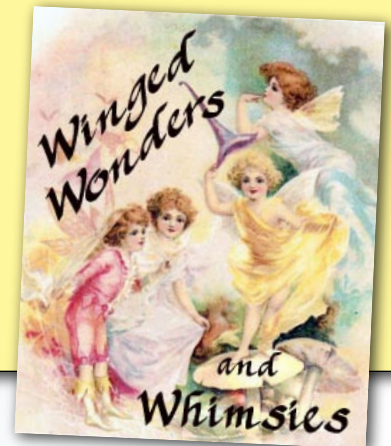


"I just finished unzipping and opening version 1 of this amazing kit. I am bowled over at your generosity in giving this away! Just for that I will subscribe to the e zine. This was fun to open and look at all the beautiful art. I see now firsthand the quality (A1!) of your kits, etc. Loved the music too. Have a restful holiday season, and thankyou, thankyou, thankyou!!!!"

- Barbara Leahey

"I love the Winged Wonders Kit. It is simply exquisite, a little jewel of a masterpiece, another one, I should add!"

- Gena Lumbroso



There are so many [Collage Kits](#) to choose from - those shown here are a mere sampling of all that Artella offers - over [25 kits](#) to choose from!

All Links are Live! Click to Explore!

The NEW WealthCare Program - Four eCourses in One!

We've brought [The Wealthcare™ Program](#) back, and it's better than ever! [The NEW Wealthcare™ Program](#): Radical Reform for Right Livelihood of Creative Spirits combines our four popular e-courses related to prosperity and spiritual abundance and presents them in a way that is ideal for artists and creative souls!

Click on the images to find out more !



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- Jenny Ryan



“[The Wealthcare™ Program](#) was wonderful, and encouraged me to process on deep levels. So much of this program seemed to be written just for me.

- Maureen McDermott



The [WealthCare Program](#) features include: Four 30-day self-study eCourses, flexible order, timing, and structure, drop-dead gorgeous lessons, hours of audio lessons, extra clip art in the [Gratitude Garland](#), and 14 enriched audio meditations.

Why combine these courses, and provide all these “luxuries”? Because creative people have special needs, and [Wealthcare™](#) is all about creating a learning environment that is entirely unique to creative people in these ways:

- The program is geared directly for creative people who have very specific blocks related to the “starving artist”, “starving writer”, or “starving healer” mentality in our society.
- The program combines the spiritual end of attracting abundance with practical tools that are especially suited for creative people who enjoy (or would like to enjoy) expressing themselves through writing and art.
- The program gracefully steps away from the “serious” side of metaphysical practices to delve into the playful aspects of creative life transformation in a spontaneous, boisterous, and often downright silly mindset.

Documents



Artist: Rebecca Trawick

Like diary pages, old documents are wonderful backgrounds to use with old photos.

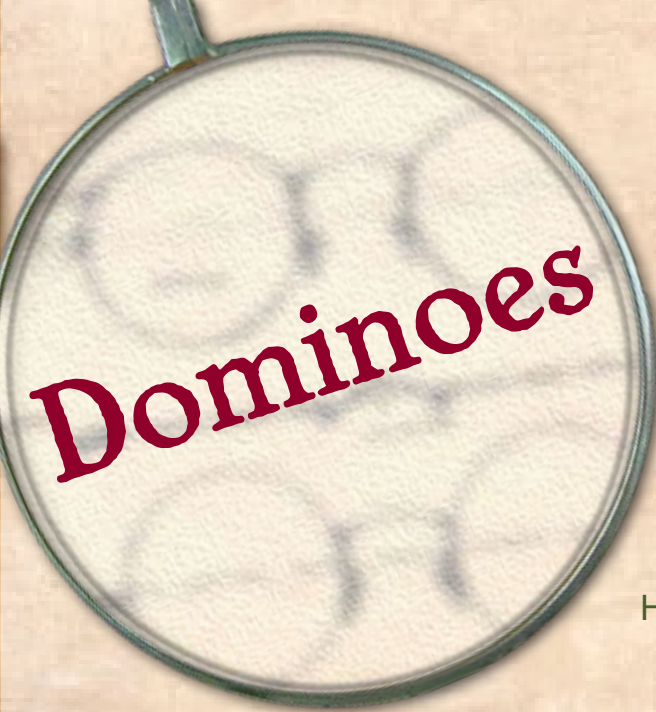
When the document has personal accuracy and relevance, it becomes very meaningful, but even adding a "random" document to a piece can charge it with visual impact and narrative intimations.

The collage shown here includes some kind of chart or graph, a handwritten letter, and a bit of sheet music. A face cropped from the photo is the focal point of the piece, and another photograph of a tree balances the design.



Here are some other ideas for the types of documents you can include:

- Bank notes
- House deeds
- Ticket stubs
- Receipts
- Advertisements
- Ledger book pages
- Prescriptions
- Birth certificates
- Death certificates
- Diplomas
- Recipes
- Machinery instructions
- Sewing patterns
- School report cards
- Old money
- Textbooks
- Bills
- Certified mail
- Medical records
- Anatomical drawings
- Wedding licenses
- Wedding certificates
- Wills
- Eulogies
- Grocery bills
- Stocks and bonds
- Telegrams
- Maps
- Chants or spells
- Luggage tags



Get playful with your photos and create miniature artworks on the backs of dominoes!

In the samples shown here, images cut out from photographs have been combined with text and other clips to tell fanciful stories.

Here are instructions for making your own domino art:

1. Photocopy images and hand-color them with Prismacolor pencils and fined tip markers.

2. Arrange the image on the back of the domino and add other embellishments until you are pleased with the design. (The samples shown here use elements like like dot stickers, cut outs, and bits of text.)

3. Glued the finished art to the domino with Tacky glue.

4. Cover the artwork with a varnish in the desired finish (gloss, semi-gloss, or matte) to protect it.

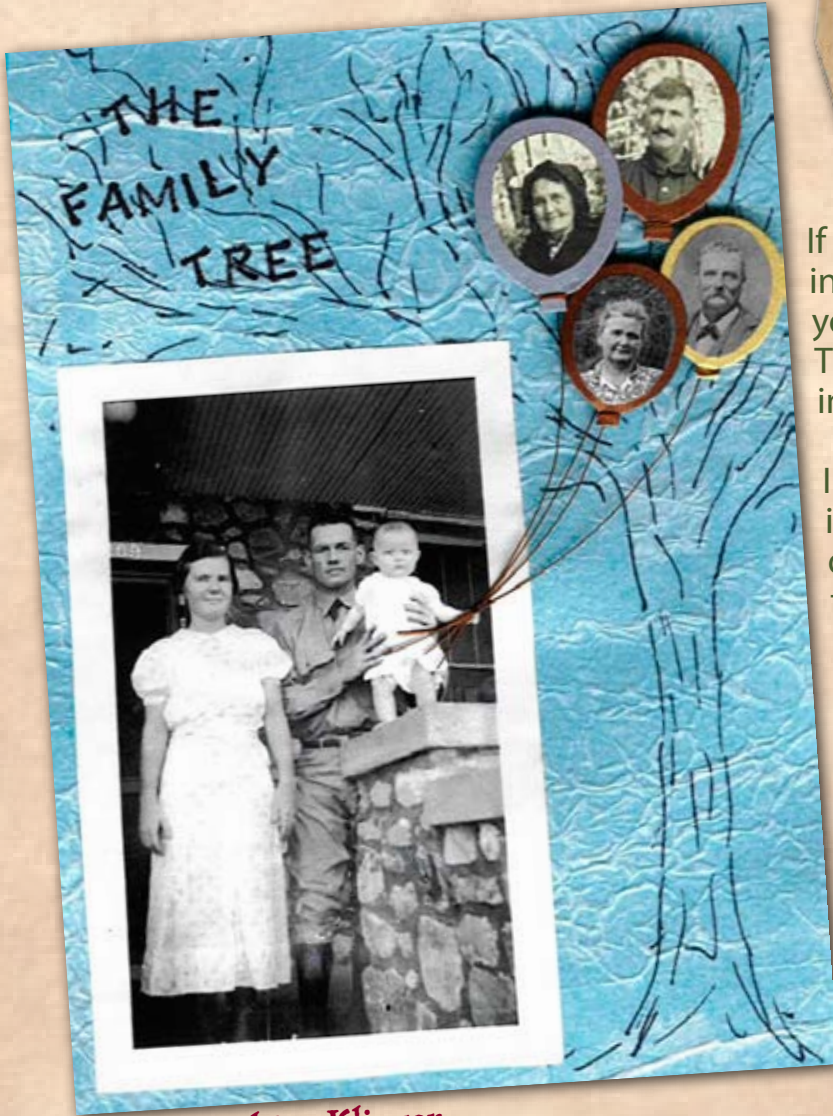
Special Notes:

- If you use wood dominoes, sand the back side before applying the art.
- You also can apply color directly to the actual surface of the domino by using permanent ink pads meant for glossy surfaces, such as [Brilliance Ink Pads](#).



Artist: Paula Peters Marra

Family Trees



Artist: Arthiss Kliever

If you want to create a piece of art that is inspired by your family tree, don't feel that you are limited to use a literal tree image. Think outside of the box to create other images or metaphors for the family tree.

In the journal page shown here, the baby in the photograph is holding a bouquet of balloons that represent her family tree. Each balloon has a picture of each grandparent.

The balloons were made with cardstock and wire. The background consists of crumpled tissue paper glued to cardstock. A permanent black pen was used to sketch a loose "tree" design in the background, and the words "The Family Tree" were stamped with permanent ink.

Other images that could be used to depict family a family tree include:

- Books on a bookshelf
- Spokes on a wheel
- Bricks on a building
- Keys on a piano
- Scoops of ice cream in a cone
- Windows of a house
- Pews in a church
- Swatches in a quilt
- Squares in a photo grid

Fabric can serve many roles, when combined with old photographs. For example:

- Fabric can be used to embellish or enhance the photo subject's attire.

- An entire collage can be built directly on fabric.

- Fabric swatches can be used directly on photographs as interesting borders, as shown in both the examples on this page.

In the example shown to the left, a piece of fabric in a pattern that echoes the subject's head-dress has been glued to the photograph. The outside edge of the fabric was frayed to add a "fringe" effect.

In the piece shown to the right, the fabric is used as a top border to accentuate the faded colors that have been applied to the main image using [Photoshop](#) software.

In this piece, all the elements are placed on a sheet of wrinkled metallic gold paper. Both collages include metal tags adhered with small brass brads.

Consider the narrative impact of a single word on these collages. Sometimes one word does say it all!



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis



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Inspiration for Better Living: Artsy Envel-Hopes & AlphaBetter Muse Workshop

Two new inspirations to change your life...meet the [AlphaBetter Muses](#) and open your [Artsy Envel-Hopes](#)!

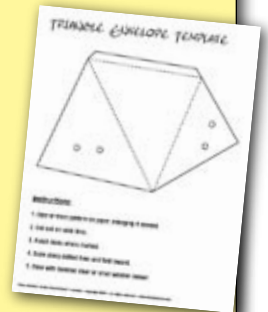
[AlphaBetter Muses](#) offer new inspiration from the hands and mind of Artella's own founding flowerchild, Marney Makridakis, presents a friendly family of Muses who are ready to lead you through an unforgettable journey of self-discovery, inner healing, sacred inspiration, creative fun, and all-around BETTER living!

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"I have been thrilled to discover so many different ways to make envelopes and of all the dreams, thoughts, memories and more that could be stuffed into them. My only disappointment is that the 30 days are over."

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"I absolutely LOVE the [Alphabetter Muse course](#). I've received the first lesson and it has energized me already! I always wanted to start an art journal but never really knew where to begin. Thanks!!"

- Pam Tucker

If the idea of having a simple, doable art project to play with every day makes you smile...

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"[You*UTM](#) has opened my mind to possibilities I haven't considered before. It's not just a "learning a process" program, it is also wonderful inspiration and encouragement of sleeping creativity! Marney's gentle & brilliant shepherding through the process provides a comfortable, safe, yet stimulating, learning environment for my covert artist/writer to emerge into and expand through. I am excited to witness myself exploring areas I never have before and bringing forward ideas seemingly out of nowhere!"

- Donna McGuigan

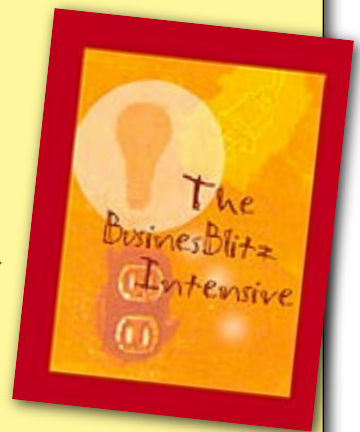
"THANK YOU for a wonderfully inspiring, satisfying and juicy teleconference!!! It was so great to meet you, Marney, and all of the other amazing, creative people who communed with us. I can see how this exercise would conjure up magical new ideas and connections that one might never think of solo. Thanks for hosting such a wonderful forum in which all things are possible."

- Karen Amore-Mueller



"Just have to let you know how much I love my Artella membership, Artella Magazine and the new e-book [Booklarks](#). I am a fledgling artist but it gives me the courage and inspiration to have fun and appreciate my own art. [Booklarks](#) deserves some kind of award - it is delightful."

- Gail Edlund



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Fibers

In this collage, thin and fuzzy colored fibers are used to partially obscure several images in order to create a special effect; these images signify the memories of the main figure in the picture.

This technique is a creative way to display a family tree, and the fibers also add texture and dimension to the piece.

Here are some more ideas for using fibers with old photographs:

- Add pieces of yarn or thread to the subject's attire (i.e., as a belt, scarf, bow in the hair, or lace on a dress bodice)
- Combine several fibers to create a tassel to add sophistication to a photograph
- String letters (tiles, tags, punch-outs) on fibers to spell a word or words
- Add fibers to tags that are included as part of the composition
- Use fibers and ribbons to create borders around a photograph to draw attention to it in a larger composition
- Attach fibers and fringe to hang down from a photo or larger composition
- Tie fibers around dried flowers to include in the work



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis

Flip Book

In the piece shown here, one photograph of two women driving a car inspired an entire pictorial journey! Several old postcards were made into a hinged flip book, with the original photo as the cover.

Fictitious messages were written on each of the postcards so that the piece chronicles a made-up adventure of these two women.



Artist: Arthiss Kliever

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Digital Altered Books - the Brand New Art Genre!

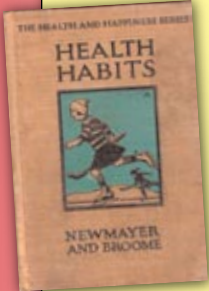
Digital Altered Books™ are the latest phenomenon to hit the creative world - here's your chance to try the brand new art genre that merges the fascinating process of altering beautiful vintage books with the creative ease of digital imaging technology.

Simply select a vintage book from our library, and you receive 10 high-resolution, excellent-quality scans of pages from a vintage book, including the front cover, back cover, and 8 inner pages that have been chosen specifically for their interesting and creative altering potential.

Then, choose any and as many Digital Ephemera Packs as you like! Perhaps you have some gifts or projects in mind and you would like to use images of authentic buttons, charms, and jewelry parts. Or maybe you'd rather work with vintage photos of children, labels, and the eclectic pieces in the "Grandma's Drawer" Pack! With over 25 packs already available and new packs constantly being released, you'll have great selection of authentic images.

Also included at no extra charge with every Digital Vintage Book™, is your complimentary coupon for Artella's digital altered book conversion service, where we turn your book pages into an interactive digital altered book that you can share with your friend, family, the entire Artella community or anyone else you choose!

Click on the images to find out more about the books and embellishment packs!

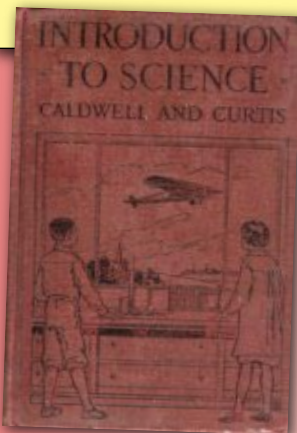


"I would never have imagined that making Altered Books or even just looking at them could be so addictive. I would recommend that everyone try at least one just for the pure fun of it."

- Julie Burger

"After being introduced to digital altered books, life hasn't been the same since! It brings together all one's artistic skills, and also provides narrative potential. Creating a digital book has been an invigorating and rewarding project. Thanks, Artella, and everyone for all your fine efforts."

- Barb Starrenburg



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NEW! You can now download a free video of an online workshop called "Digital Altered Books Revealed", presented by Marney Makridakis, to introduce you to the intriguing art of Digital Altered Books™! [Click here to go to the video.](#)

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Click on each book image to find out more !

"I love this workshop-it is so nice to get into conversations with my visiting muses at the end of the day. Pure Joy!"

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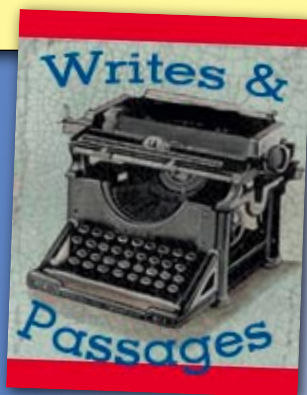


"This class made me monumentally happy! Since it's only just finished, I can't say anything about the lasting effects, but I suspect there will be many.... I've been looking for new ways to practice gratitude and I love these creative ideas."

- soren mason temple

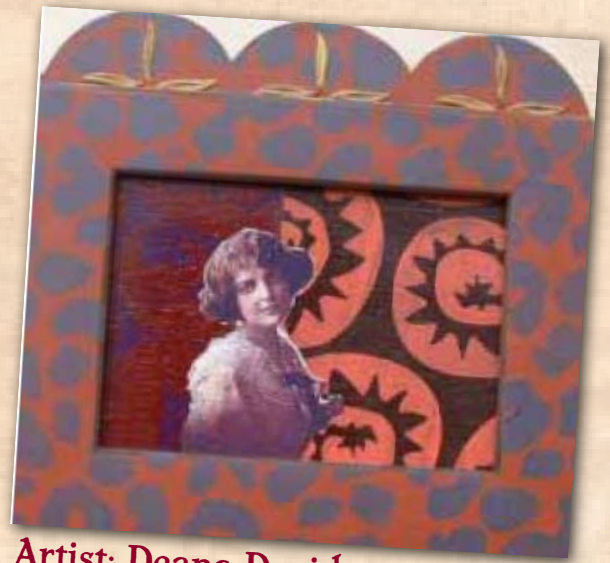
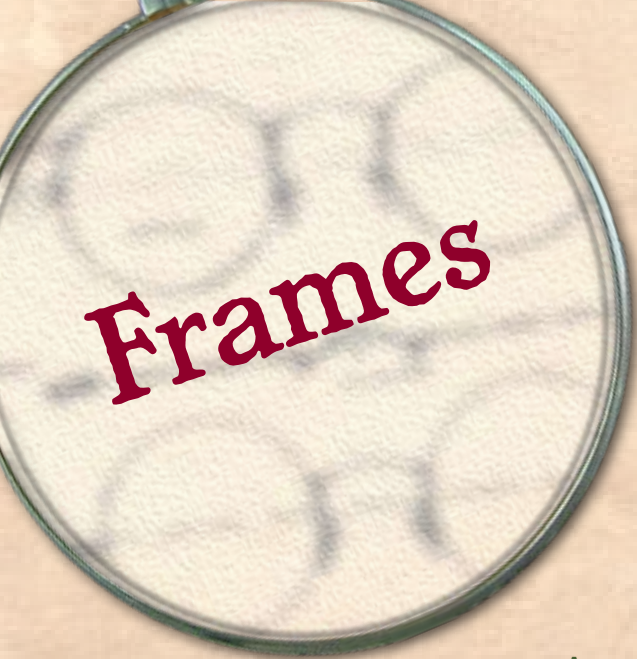
"I appreciate this hands on method of focusing on all the intangibles that are so very much more worthy of the meaning of abundance than all the materialistic stuff that one can lose oneself in! It's fantastic!"

- Patricia Shook



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Artist: Deana David

A special way to showcase old photos is to create a picture frame that is part of the art, itself. The frame shown above, exemplifies this technique. The background applied to the canvas seems to "spill over" onto the frame itself. The patterns, created with a combination of free-hand painting and rubber stamps, overlap one another to create an appealing contrast.

Smaller frames can be used to draw focus to a particular portion of the photo. The example to the left is a fun and funky fabric purse that showcases a photo framed in a slide holder.

In the piece shown below, a small metal frame is used to focus on one particular girl in the photograph of children playing.



Artist: Donna Cartaçena

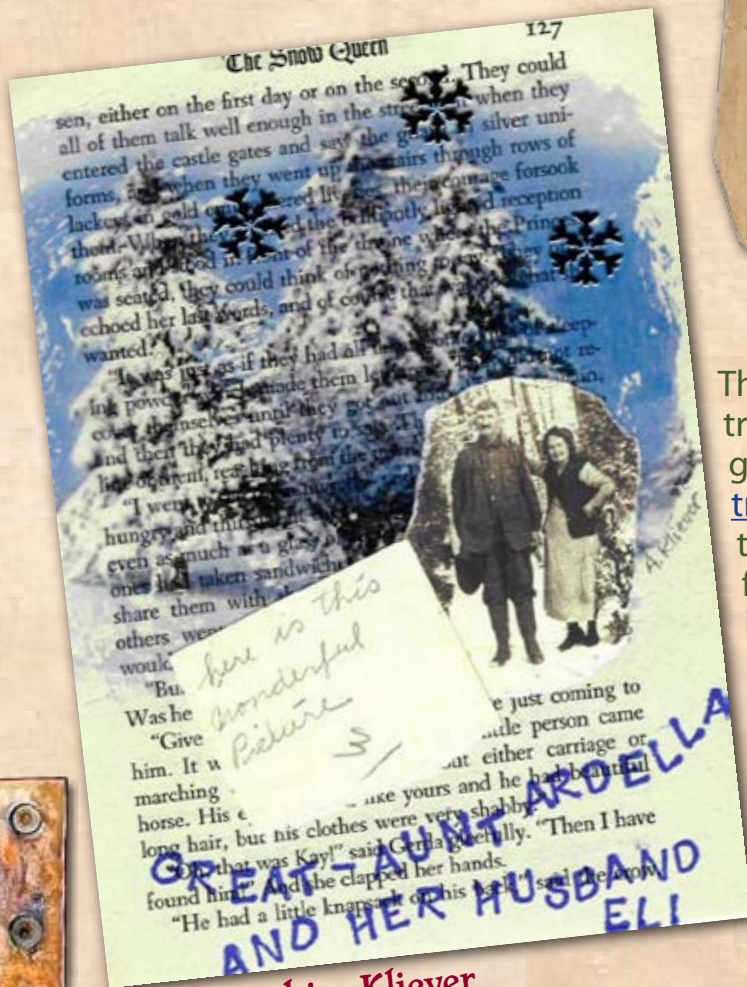
The frame, originally black, was rubbed with gold [Rub-n-Buff](#) to achieve its current gold finish. The intricate motif of the frame is echoed in the art nouveau patterned paper on which the photo is mounted.



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis



Gel Medium Transfer



Artist: Arthiss Kliever

There are many ways to achieve image transfers -- with contact paper, with a heat gun, with packing tape, and with [Lazer-tran film](#) -- but the textural possibilities that are available with gel medium transfer make it especially conducive to working with old photographs.

In the piece shown here, the image of snow-covered trees in a blue sky was transferred onto a page titled "The Snow Queen", which was taken from an old book of fairy tales. A portion of a photo was torn and glued to the page, along with a copy of what was written on the original photo in 1931: "Here is this beautiful picture."

This transfer was made from an image printed on Image-Flow Paper using an ink-jet printer. The steps:

- Brush medium onto the "receiving" surface (i.e., the book page) as evenly as possible. Test for even application, lightly smooth over the medium with your index finger, feeling for very dry or very wet areas. For little texture, make the coat very thin; for greater texture, you can build up the medium.
- Check for the inked side of the image and lay onto wet surface. The transparency will stick to the surface. If the surface is too wet, it may slide & smear. Immediately begin to rub the entire surface with your finger or a spoon, starting in crucial areas like faces and words. Use a very steady hand to keep the image still as you burnish. Once the entire surface is in contact, you can adjust pressure in some areas to ensure even transfer or less in other areas for a softer effect.
- Slow lift the page, starting in a corner, to expose the wet gel medium that has "taken" the image. Allow to dry completely.

Gemstones & Jewels

Gemstones and jewels add shimmer, shine, and glitz to compositions using old photos. Consider the following uses:



Artist: Deana David

- Use gemstones to accent a piece of clothing worn by the subject, or an existing piece of jewelry, as has been done with the headband in the piece shown to the use.

- Use tiny rhinestones directly on the subject's face or body to add a bit of drama and glitter. This can be especially effective in the corners of and around the eyes, as shown here (left).

- Create a hair ornament for the subject of the photo. In the example shown here (bottom left), tiny pearls were glued to a metal accent in the shape of a leaf, and then glued to lie on the subject's hair.



Artist: Deana David

- Hammer jeweled studs directly into a picture frame or shadow box, as shown in the corners of the shadow box shown (bottom left).

- Embellish fibers, fabric, lace, or mesh with tiny jewels. In this example (left), tiny pearls and blue gemstones have been meticulously glued to the vertical strip of lace.

- Use tiny jewels to create a frame around a photograph (see Beads)

- Use gemstones to highlight other areas of photographs. For example, yellow jewels could be adhered to the sun, and green jewels to the grass.

- Use a string of jewels to visually connect two photographs used in a single composition



Gold Leaf

Gold leafing is an easy way to add elegance to a work of art that involves old photos. Gold leaf is available in a rainbow of colors and finishes to create an astonishing variety of effects.

In this sample, solid sheets of gold leaf have been applied to the background, while other gold leaf accents include a motif in gold and burnt-orange copper, and a repeated circular design in a translucent sea-green leaf.

To apply gold leaf, you need to use a tacky sizing adhesive such as [Duo Adhesive](#). You can apply the sizing medium in any design with a paintbrush, or use rubber stamps for a more exact design (such as shown in the motifs on the right side of the shadow box in this example).

Instructions for gold leafing, applying a design or covering a surface with a paint brush:

1. Pour a bit of the tacky adhesive on to a paper plate. Dip the paint brush in the adhesive and then cover the desired area. It has the consistency of a very thin glue.

2. After brushing on the adhesive, wait 2 minutes to allow the adhesive to "cure". Then, sprinkle the leaf flecks over the area with the adhesive. If you are using sheets of gold leaf instead of gold flecks, simply place the sheet down directly on the area that has been brushed.)

3. you have sprinkled enough leaf to sufficiently cover the area, use your index finger to tap the leaf into the area, using moderate to heavy pressure as you tap. You'll see the flakes flatten and adhere directly to the surface.

4. After you have tapped over the entire area, use your index finger to "burnish" the leaf by rubbing back and forth very quickly. You also can use the back of a spoon as a burnisher. As you burnish, the flecks that did not adhere to the frame will brush away. Repeat these steps to cover all desired areas with gold leaf.

Artist: Deana David



Grids

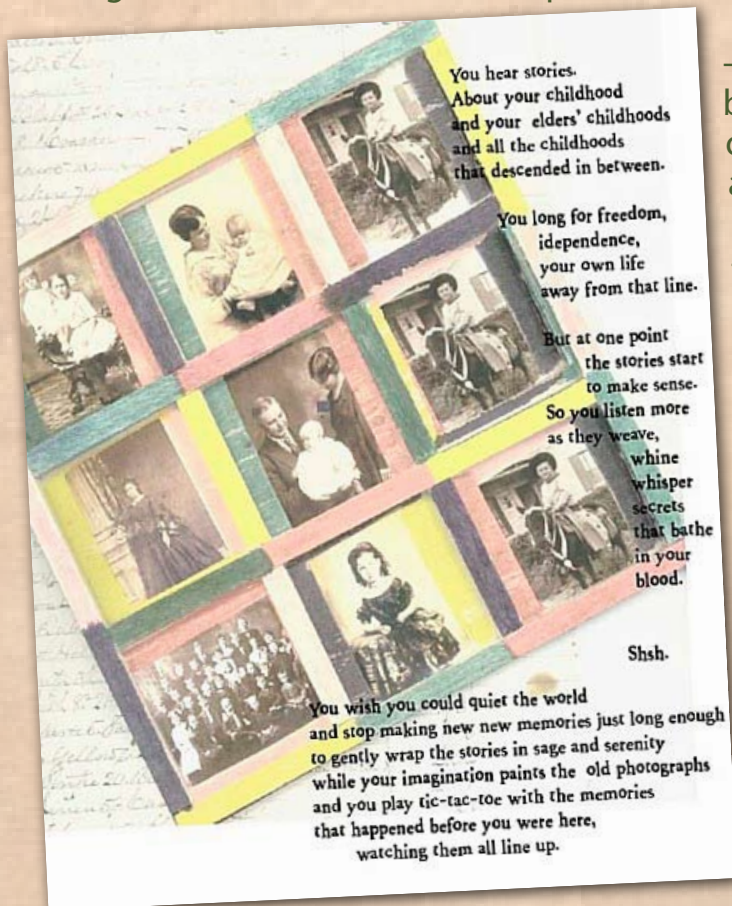
If you want to combine several small photos in a single composition, there are a variety of ways that you can use the concept of a grid.

In the example shown here, a grid is used quite literally, as photos have been placed in a painted wooden tic-tac-toe board.

In this instance, the use of the grid is not merely aesthetic; it is used metaphorically. The piece, originally an offering for Artella's weekly newsletter, tells of hearing old family stories... and the experience of feeling that they all suddenly "line up". To illustrate the point, three identical images are placed in a row on the far right side.

Here are some other ideas for using grids with your photos:

- Mount photographs in a grid and use vintage ribbon or lace for the "gridlines"
- Add dimension to a grid of small photographs by elevating some of the images using different widths of foam tape



- Create a 3-D grid for assemblages by using plastic boxes with dividers or curio boxes as the homes for small assemblages

- Create a flat, two-dimensional grid of photos, scan it, and apply different effects to each "square" of the grid, using [Photoshop software](#)



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis

Iron-on Fabric Transfers

By transferring images to fabric, you can achieve wonderfully tactile effects. In the example shown here, the image has been transferred to white cotton fabric that had been dyed to a sepia color. The piece of fabric was adhered to matboard, and then further embellished with other fabric pieces, rubber stamping, and mosaic tiles.

Instructions for fabric transfers are below. You will need an iron, scissors, the receiving fabric, and a computer, scanner, printer, and iron-on transfer paper that is compatible with your printer, such as [T-Shirt Transfers](#).

If you don't have access to a scanner and printer, you can also have color iron-on transfer pages printed at your local copy shop.

1. Print the image on the transfer paper, using your computer, scanner, and printer.

2. Carefully cut out the image from the transfer paper. Keep in mind that any borders will show when the image is transferred to the tablecloth, so cut out the image accordingly.

3. Lay the image face down on the receiving fabric.

4. To transfer the image to the fabric, follow the ironing instructions on the specific transfer paper you are using. For the Avery [T-Shirt Transfers](#), you simply need to place a plain pillowcase underneath the fabric, and then iron a single pass across each image with even pressure, counting about 20 seconds per pass.

5. Allow the image to completely cool, so that it is cool to the touch (about 10 minutes). Gently pull back the paper to remove it from the fabric. The image will have transferred to the fabric!

Washing instructions: Machine wash item separately (first time only) in cold water with color-safe detergent. Do not bleach. Remove from washer immediately, as colors may bleed if left wet too long (if bleeding occurs, wash again immediately.) Tumble dry warm. If possible, add dry towels to dryer to promote quicker drying. Check specific product instructions for other drying tips.



Artist: Deana David

Journaling

As you work with old photos, don't be afraid to add your own words to the composition. The process and concept of adding commentary to accompany photos is called journaling. Adding your own journaled words as they relate to old photographs creates a relationship between past and present that is very interesting and paradoxical.

In this example, the background was created with watercolor paints. Once dry, the photo was adhered to the page and the text was added with a waterproof marker.

Play around with different styles of your own penmanship, or use computer fonts to create your commentary.

If you are working on a piece involving photos representing your own family

heritage, incorporate the commentary of several different people by inviting your family to add their own words and thoughts to your artwork.



Dog Medicine means loyalty to a fault but its also blind siding - Defending ferociously when perhaps we need not. Continuing to take the crap of one who blind loyalty is giving to. Its also a wonderful gift. Once you have the dogs loyalty - you are a companion for life, the dog does not back stab, gossip or other wise subvert friendship. It also cleanses the Mayhounds are Angels - Something to Ponder.

Artist: Deb Silva




Lace

Perhaps nothing else immediately transports us back to the past like lace. Old lace is available in so many styles, patterns, and sizes that it is suitable to be used on just about any surface.

If vintage lace is not available, you can buy new lace at a fabric or craft store and age it to look suitably old. Some aging techniques include:

- Soak the lace in tea or coffee until the desired shade is reached; allow to dry before using it in your art.
- Use brown and sepia-toned ink pads directly on the lace by gently tapping the pad over the lace.
- Dripping wax over the lace.
- Burning a match and then rubbing the lace in the ashes; perhaps even burning corners of the lace.



In this example, the lace selected is an intricate floral pattern accented with blue threads. The background of the canvas has been painted in a similar periwinkle blue to bring out the color of these highlights.

The lace, placed off-center on one side of the canvas, provides the perfect feminine balance to the composition. While the other elements in the composition are heavy and dark (etched copper hammered in with studs, metal findings, mosaic tiles, and a dark transparency), the lace lightens up the piece with a bit of whimsy and grace.

Consider these ideas for using lace with your photos:

- Mount a single photo directly on lace for a simple design.
- Use lace as a "stamp" by dipping it in paint or a very "juicy" ink pad, and then laying it on the surface and applying pressure by rolling over it with a brayer. The ink or paint will be left on the surface in pattern of the lace.
- Use lace as a border around an entire collage or assemblage.



Artist: Deana David

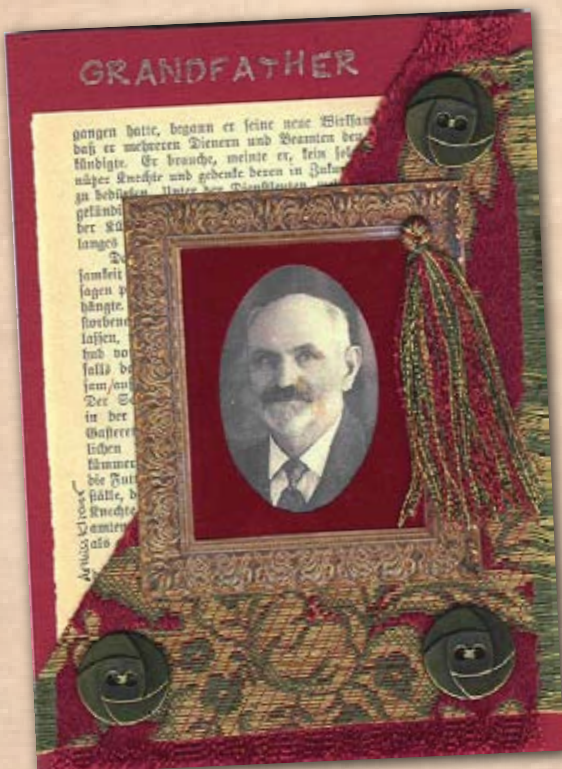
Languages

Adding text in a foreign language can instantly convey a sense of time and place in your work.

In the first sample shown here (below left), the page of German text creates a sense of identity for the German Grandfather depicted. The piece is further embellished with fabric, fibers, and buttons. The frame around the photograph adds dimension, even though it is only one-dimensional (it is actually a frame cut out from an art catalog.)

In the sample shown on the bottom right, the reference is less literal, and more figurative. Text in both French and English combine to create a sense of romance and wonder. Torn pieces of old documents create a juxtaposition between romance and realism.

You can find books containing foreign text in used bookstores and at garage sales and flea markets. Also keep an eye out for other ways that you can incorporate foreign languages into your work, such as in dictionaries, documents, tickets, recipes, diaries, handwritten photo captions, advertisements, and signs.



Artist: Arthiss Kliever



Artist: Deb Silva



Lazertran

Lazertran, a product that allows you to transfer an image's "film", allows you to transfer an image to just about any surface, including metal. An especially effective transfer technique involves transferring an image on copper that has been painted white behind the image. The result is a ghost-like effect that is both haunting and graceful.

To achieve this look, when you cut out the image to be transferred onto [Lazertran](#) film, be sure to keep the "excess" paper that is not cut away, and use it as a "stencil" over the sheet of copper. With the stencil carefully in place, paint the open area white. When you are ready to adhere the [Lazertran](#) film to the surface, use care to place the film exactly over the white painted area.



Artist: Deana David

In this piece, the copper sheet is embellished with etched designs, and pearls with lime green seed bead centers have been sewn securely through the copper sheet. A strip of rainbow copper leafing runs down one side. The stripes of copper leafing on the frame further accentuate the rich copper environment.



Maps

Maps symbolize journeys - literal and metaphorical. As such, they are the perfect element to be combined with old photos, which also speak of literal and metaphorical journeys.

In the sample shown below, a map is used as the background of a collage that hints at the gentle journey of childhood.



Artist: Arthiss Kliever



Foreign text, buttons, and wings adorning the child add to the old-time innocence suggested by this piece.

The example shown above uses an entirely different kind of map: a hand-drawn map of the U.S. that includes miniature tags suspended from tiny brads marking the names of cities that have been presumably visited by the bus shown in the photo.

This fun narrative depiction adds a real sense of storytelling to the artwork, opening the imagination to all the stories that lie within.



Artist: Karyn Gartel

Metal Findings

Small metal findings, which include everything from jewelry pieces to mismatched pieces of hardware, add dimension and decoration to art-work that features old photos. In the example shown here (top right), four floral crests have been placed at four intertion corners of the painted frame, each accented with a foiled rhinestone. These pieces draw the eye inward to the photograph and the interested painted background on which it resides.



Artist: Deana David

In the second example (bottom right), the metal findings have a more direct relationship to the photo itself, acting as hair ornaments and fashion accents. In these piece, the pattern of the rubber stamped background was repeated with gold leaf, and the image itself was rendered with a Lazertran transfer.

In both examples, the metal findings maintain their original gold finish.

An alternative is to age the pieces further with an antinquing method. Metal pieces can be aged by:

- Rubbing acrylic paint in a dark color (such as Raw Umber) on the metal piece, and then rubbing off the excess paint
- Rusting the metal pieces by soaking them in a solution of half bleach and half vinegar, and then air-drying the rusted objects. To accelerate the rusting, add an already-rusted item to the soaking solution.



Artist: Deana David

Mica



Artist: Deana David

Mica is a natural mineral that can be obtained in a variety of formats, including sheets, flakes, tiles, and powders. Mica sheets and tiles are extremely thin, somewhat luminescent sheets that flake easily and can be peeled apart. They are a wonderful surface for image transfers, offering a resulting image that seems to glow.



In the example shown here, a piece of mica was torn to leave a ragged edge, and then peeled into two sheets. A very thin coat of [Duo Adhesive](#) was applied to the bottom layer with a sponge, and then allowed to dry. The image was printed on [Studio Paper](#) with an inkjet printer, using "glossy paper" on the setting (the goal is to have the ink be somewhat wet on the copy). The piece of mica without Duo was placed onto the image, and then burnished with a finger. After burnishing, the two matching pieces were placed together into a "sandwich", enclosing the transfer between the layers. The "sandwich" was turned over and the backside burnished, then the [Studio Paper](#) was lifted off and cleaned (it can be used again for subsequent transfers).

After it was dry, the two layers of mica with the transfer were mounted to a copper-etched sheet, accented with embossed rubber stamped images. A row of vintage shell buttons complete this piece, which is housed in a gold-leafed frame.

Mosaic Tiles

Mosaic tiles are a great way to decorate photos that you display in frames, shadow boxes, or on flat surfaces like matboards or canvases..

You can buy ready-made mosaic glass tiles in a variety of colors, to which you can add your own effects. In the examples shown to the immediate and bottom left, the tiles have been treated using a variety of media, such as rubber stamps, embossing powders, and gold leaf. For safety, the glass tiles have been edged in either metallic tape or stained glass liquid leading.



Artist: Deana David



Artist: Deana David



Artist: Deana David

Negative Images

For this art journal spread, the image on the right was given a "sepia" effect in [Photoshop](#), and printed. Then, a negative image of the original photo was created using the "negative" setting on a printer. (The "negative" option is also available in most photo editing software programs.)

In this particular instance, the positive/negative pairing seems to hint at a political meaning. A few other uses for a "negative" photo include:

- Placing a "positive" image of a subject against a "negative" image of a background, or vice-versa.
- Create a series of sequential images (i.e., a child growing up), alternating between positive and negative images.
- Print the negative image on a piece of acetate and place it over the positive image, or vice-versa
- Place the positive image on a flap that can be lifted to reveal the negative image underneath



Artist: Deb Silva



Artist: Deb Silva



Opening Doors

Going a step further than two-dimensional cutouts, doors and windows that open and close are an interesting way to reveal a photograph.

In this example, a triptych has been stamped, embossed, and cut out to frame the girl in the photo.

When the doors are opened, the charming inscription on the photo - "An old favorite-Ruth Piffer" - is revealed

The background of this piece is a book page with the chapter title "Little Ida's Flowers".



Roses have been stamped and embossed in two colors of embossing powder, and three 3-D rose embellishments have been added, giving further dimension to this interesting and interactive piece.



Artist: Arthiss Kliever

Painting Photos



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis

One way to add color to photographs is to paint directly on the image, itself. This technique allows you to create both the look of hand-tinted photos, as well as creating more vivid, abstract effects.

If you are not using original photographs (and for archival purposes, it is best to use copies), print the image on a glossy photograph paper. With a glossy surface, you can use a variety of painting media to get the look you want.

In the example shown here, a black and white image was printed on photo paper and then markers from [a photo tinting kit](#) were used to tint the subject's image, adding color to both her attire, as well as shading to her skin, face, and hair. The shades were chosen to match the coloring of the existing colors in the two pieces of Eiffel Tower clip art that were to be added to the piece.

The background curtain was dripped with watered-down [Radiant Pearls](#) for a pearlescent, "wet" look. [Radiant Pearls](#) are very flexible and forgiving, and produce an unmatched sheen!



Photo editing software adds a fantastic dimension to working with vintage photographs, as all kinds of amazing effects are right there at your fingertips.

[Adobe Photoshop](#) is known as the most standard graphics software, but you can use many other programs to create interesting effects. Most PCs have some kind of image editing software included on the machine when purchased.

In [Photoshop](#), the special effects are called filters, and there are so many to choose from that the possible combinations number in the thousands.

In the art journal page shown here (right), a vintage photo was scanned and the "Solarized" filter was applied, then printed on a color printer. A swatch of fabric, a transparency, and other collage elements were added to the composition.

The example shown at bottom right was created using the "Fresco" filter in [Photoshop](#), one of dozens of fine art effects. (You can see the original, pre-software version of this collage in Gemstones). With photo editing software, you can even make a contemporary photo look old, simply by adding filters, as has been done to the photo of baton twirlers, below. In this case, the saturation (color) of the photo was eliminated, then treated with sepia filters, then the "Noise" and "Dust and Scratches" filters were added.



Artist: Deb Silva



Artist: Deana David

Polymer Clay

With a bakeable transfer medium, such as [Liquid Sculpey](#), you can actually transfer photos onto clay before backing it usual, to use in your polymer clay products.

This medium, which has a paste-like consistency, works best with black and white photocopies, or photocopies that you've doctored with colored pencils and chalks (as was done for the photo in the example shown).

Following the instructions on the bottle, apply the medium to your polymer "block". Bake for the required time, immerse in water, and then scrub the paper off, leaving the image on the clay.

Bear in mind that your image will transfer in reverse, so be sure to reverse the photocopy of the image, if necessary.

The patterned blocks shown in this quilt-like design were created using the clay technique of mokume gane, which involves rolling or cranking several colored sheets together so the layers are very thin (the entire sheet should be about a 6 on a pasta machine). Try working with several different colors, and even try adding metallic foil to a sheet of clay to use in the mokume gane process. This is a brilliant way to add some glitz to the final "quilt".

After creating the thin sheets, stamp the sheets with bold, graphic rubber stamps, resulting in a high-relief negative the stamps clearly imprinted in the multi-layered clay sheet. Finely detailed stamps do not leave a very solid impression in the clay.

Then, use a tissue blade to "shave" away the raised design to reveal the different colors of clay from the "sandwich" of layers you assembled. The more thin layers you have, the more dynamic the effect will be.

After designing several sheets, use the tissue blade to cut them into pieces that you can mix and match into a quilt. Bake according to the package instructions.



Artist: Deana David



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis



Old or foreign postage stamps can add just the right touch of worldliness to an old photo, as shown in the photo in the collage on the lower right.

There's another way that you can incorporate the look of postage stamps with your old photographs, and that is turn the photos into "stamps", themselves.

By simply creating a white perforated background (using either perforated scissors or a pre-designed template for faux postage art), you can lay any tiny image over the background and - voila! - you have an instant stamp!

In the example shown to the left, a miniature collage (with a photo as its base) is placed on a perforated background in the midst of other stamps (some flat, some raised with foam tape).

In the example at the bottom left, which was the base of the cover for [Artella issue 5](#), small faux stamps are suspended in niches carved in a book.



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis



Artist: Deb Silva

Rubber Stamps

Rubber stamps have endless uses when used in art compositions. Here are a few ways you can combine stamping with your old photos:

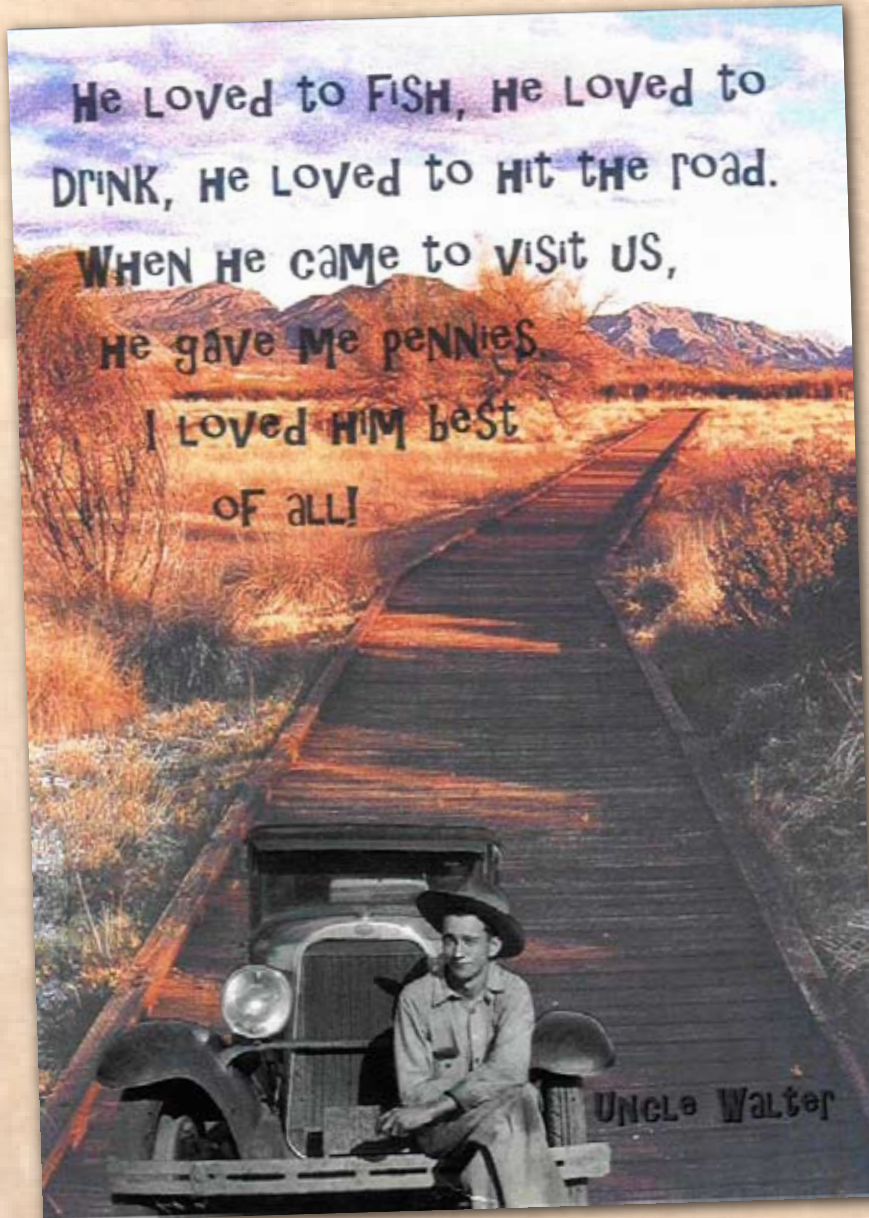
- Use stamps to create ornate background papers on which to mount your photos (see example)
- Use letter stamps to add captions, titles, or other phrases related to the photo
- Use stamps to create an environment for the subject (i.e., leaves, flowers, clouds, etc.)
- Use stamps to simulate the look of old love letters, documents, maps, sheet music, postcards, or postage stamps to use in your composition
- Use stamps to embellish the subject's attire or add "props" that the subject is holding
- Use large background stamps to apply effects to photograph images (i.e., webbing, crackling, Fresco finish, etc.)



Artist: Deana David



Scenery Additions



Artist: Arthiss Kliever

In the example shown here, the image of "Uncle Walter" and his car has been cut out of the original image and placed on a background photo taken from a calendar of landscapes! You can really have some fun with this technique of placing subjects in new "environments"!

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Small Scale Compositions

If you're looking for a technique that requires few supplies and can be completed fairly quickly, try creating tiny collages that incorporate your photos with other layered papers.

Both examples here are created on a very small scale. The example on the left is 3.5" x 2.5", the standard size for Artist Trading Cards (ATC's). This is an easy and effective way to tie together two separate photos, as shown in both examples, here. Sparse but effective papers collaged into the background unify the two separate photos, without making the composition feel cluttered.

The example on the right is an even smaller canvas: a formica chip. In this case, a complete collage has been created on the tag and embellishments have been added to create a jewelry pendant.

Working on a small scale is an interesting challenge, especially when the goal is to incorporate photos. If working in a small scale, remember that you can use a home or commercial copier to resize the images so that they are small enough to fit your scale. Because each piece is very small, working on a small scale allows you to create a work with diverse elements, even if your "ephemera stash" is small..



Artist: Deb Silva



Artist: Deb Silva



Superimposed Images



Artist: Arthiss Kliever

When cropping photos, consider superimposing parts of the image in another background. In this example, the face of the subject has been superimposed in the environment of an old postcard, on which the words "imagine" and "dream" have been rubber stamped. (Note that the image had to be reversed, using photo editing software, in order to fit in the postcard).

The text, "Class of 1925, 'Most Vivid Imagination'" adds a fun element of humor to the piece.

Transparencies



Artist: Deb Silva



Artist: Melissa Chapin

The translucent qualities of transparency film (also known as acetate) is the perfect medium to use with old photos. Its very nature is ethereal and mysterious, allowing layers of materials to be viewed in new ways.

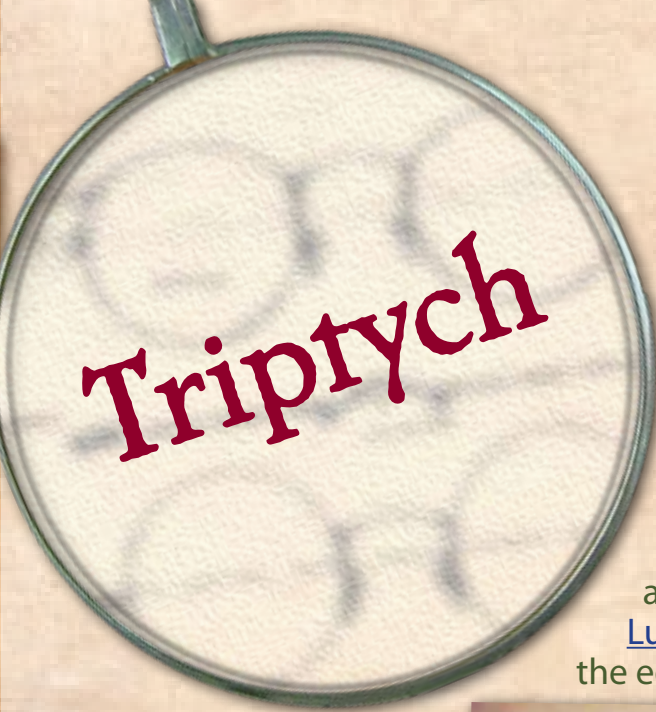
In the first example here (left), text has been printed on a transparency and then placed over the main photograph image for dimension.

An entirely different way to use transparencies is to project the photo itself on transparency film. One way to do this is to simply print a photo on transparency paper (as done for the text in the above example). Another method is to transfer an image directly to the film using adhesive-treated acetate, which "receives" the image when soaked in water.

Instructions:

1. Make a copy of the photo using toner (not laser or inkjet) ink and place it on the acetate. Carefully and thoroughly burnish the back of it with your finger or a credit card.
2. Soak the acetate (with your image stuck to it) in warm water for 10-15 minutes.
3. Rub off all the paper from the acetate. Be careful to get all the last filmy bits (you can hold it up to the light to see where the white paper still is left).
4. The image will be completely transferred to the acetate. Allow to dry and use in a composition as desired. (See example, left.)





A triptych is an piece of art that consists of three side-by-side parts, panels, or canvases. Since there are three panels to work with, a triptych is a great format for telling progressive stories with photographs. Also, since the triptych is an ancient symbol of both architectural and symbolic significance, the format adds an instant sense of antiquity to the finished product.

In this example, three panels tell a progressive story of a girl who grows up, falls in love, and gets married. The canvas frame panels offer a great surface for embellishments. The entire frame was painted with blank paint, and then embellished with patterns painted with metallic [Lumiere](#) paints. A [Krylon gold leafing pen](#) was used to line the edges of the canvases and inner frames.



Artist: Marney K. Makridakis

In the first panel, the photo is framed in a painted slide holder, and then mounted on a copper sheet that has been run through a crimper. The decorative elements on each panel ("believe", "eternity", "inspire" and the butterfly image) have been created by pressing rubber stamps into hot foam sheets. Watch parts, ball bearings, and a metal key complete the composition.

Here are the instructions for the "foam stamping" technique, inspired by Leslie Altman:

1. Cut a piece of foam (i.e., "fun foam" from a craft store) to size. Use a heat gun to heat both the front and back sides of the foam until the edges just begin to curl up a bit.
2. Turn off the heat gun and immediately press the stamp into the foam. Press with steady pressure for about 5 seconds, until the foam cools. Remove the stamp from the foam.
3. If not satisfied with the impression, you can reheat the foam and start over.
4. If the impression is detailed and deep, the next step is to embellish the piece with paint or other media. Try using a cosmetic sponge to lightly brush paint over the surface, so that only the "raised" parts of the stamped foam receive the color.

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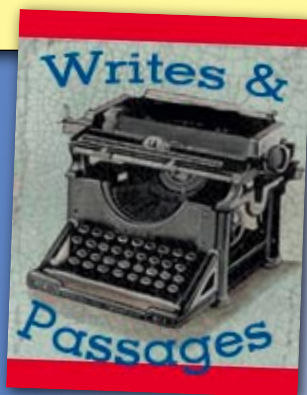


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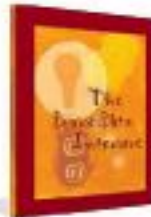
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Artist: Marney K. Makridakis

Wax

The collage example shown here was created layers of melted beeswax and crayon drippings. In this case, the wax is used not only to adhere the photograph images, papers, and pressed flowers to the canvas, it also adds layers of depth and color that create a hazy dreamlike effect.

Here are the basic steps for creating collages with wax, inspired from the work of Claudine Hellmuth. See her book, [*Collage Discovery Workshop*](#), for more ideas and techniques:



1. Heat a chunk of beeswax (or beeswax shavings) in a slow cooker dedicated to being used for wax, or a double broiler that you can use right on your stove. In either case, keep the wax under 200 degrees and use caution!
2. Coat your surface with wax using an old paint brush (one that you don't mind ruining).
3. Add a background paper(s) into the wax and then brush hot wax over the surface. The wax will coat the background papers and adhere them to the canvas like glue.
4. Add additional elements to the collage in the same way; place them over the background papers and then brush hot wax over them. You also can use wax to attach small objects, such as buttons or charms. It adhered amazingly well!
5. Use a small quilting iron over the surface to smooth out bubble and make the wax flat. You can use a heat gun to heat larger areas before smoothing them out.
6. To add color, drip colored wax on the surface by pressing the tip of a crayon directly against the quilting iron. Gently run the quilting iron over the crayon dripping to blend the color into the background.

Wings



Artist: Arthiss Kliever

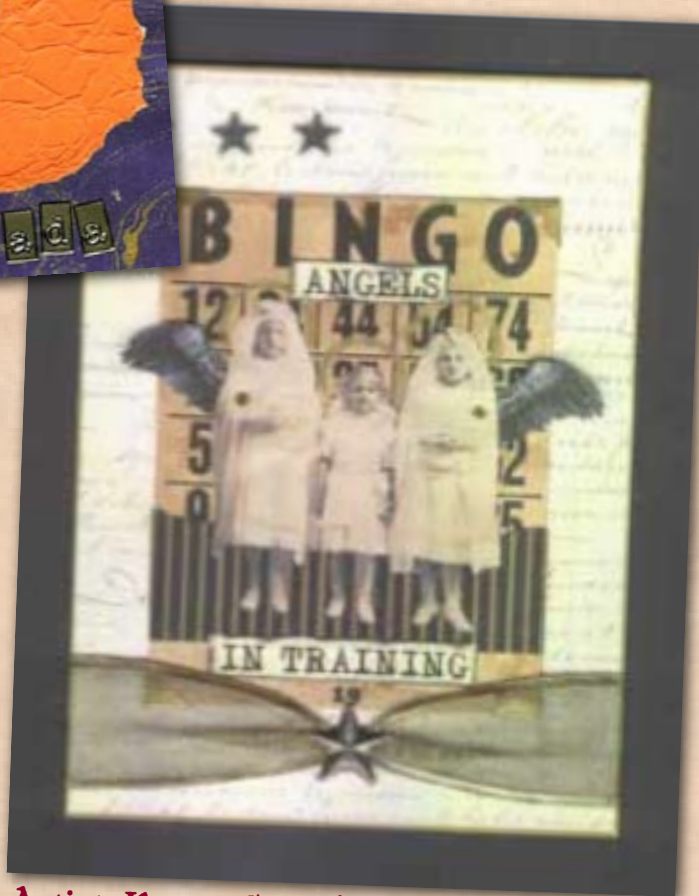
Metal tiles with the words "Cousin Vada" offer a caption for the piece.

In this example, wings cut from an image of a bird and halos drawn in gold have been added to the cut-out image of three little girls dressed for communion.

The caption, "Angels in Training" and the background of the Bingo card add to the playfulness of the piece.

A simple and striking addition to old photographs is to add wings to the subject. Wings can symbolize everything from power to whimsy to life after death.

In the example shown at the left, the wings of a craft-store silk butterfly have been cut apart and placed in slits that were cut in the photograph around the girl's arms and shoulders. This allows the wings to show through, behind her arms.



Artist: Karyn Gartel

Wire

Few things can instantly transform a composition like wire. Not only does it add interesting dimension, but tarnished metallic wire is the perfect way to enhance an old photo without making the photo look too modern.

In this example, the wire has been twisted, curled, and coiled along with beads of varying sizes and materials, and then draped around the periphery of the photo.

Consider these other ways to use wire with old photographs:

- String several small photos across wire that is threaded across a page
- Cover a photo with wire mesh
- "Sew" wire around a photo's edges, making an unusual border
- Make wire "curls" for a subject's hair or ruffles on a dress
- Replace an element in the photo with wire, such as a leash for a dog, or a string of a kite



Artist: Deana David



Words



Artist: Deana David



Artist: Karyn Gartel

Don't underestimate the power of using words right alongside your photographs. Whether they are used to add a descriptive caption to the photo, to add irony or an unexpected interpretation, or simply to balance an overall composition, there's just no denying that words tell stories.

While journaling involves your writing your own personal commentary in response to a photo, you think outside the box for the other ways that words can be integrated into your artwork to add new layers of meaning to the photos. Let yourself go! You just may find yourself loving "the waltz of words and art"!



Artist: Deana David



Artist: Jolene Elliott



Donna Cartagena is an artist who loves integrating vintage images in collages, mixed media jewelry, and fabric purses.

Melissa Chapin is a spirited Manhattan-based mixed media artist and jewelry designer. She can be contacted at MarvelousMail@aol.com.

Deana David is a New York artist and writer, currently working as a fine artist and evolving a series of literary travelogues.

Jolene Elliott's passion for creative expression has been reawakened by living by the sea in Newport Beach, California. She welcomes the sharing of email from kindred spirits at NewportArtist@aol.com.

Karyn Gartel's varied mixed media works in collage, assemblage, altered books, and more can be seen at www.altered-diva.com.

Arthiss Kliever lives in Dallas, TX, and her creative artworks include woodcuts, collage, and more recently, altered books. She can be reached at arthiss@aol.com.

Marney K. Makridakis is, among other things, the founder of Artella. Reach her at Marney@artellaland.com.

Paula Peters Marra is an artist and writer who can be reached at pixtalk@yahoo.com.

Lori Musser is a self-taught mixed media artist who uses art as a form of therapeutic expression. You may contact her at LMusser222@aol.com.

Deb Silva, a multi-media artist and quilter, is the past recipient of awards from the Houston International Quilt Show and the Tokyo Great International Quilt Festival. See more of her work in [The Shoppes of Artella, here](#).

Rebecca Trawick is an illustrator, collagist and painter who uses found materials, paper ephemera and other vintage items to create her one-of-a-kind works of art and illustrations. You can view more of her work at www.bluebirdstudios.com, her Web site for fine art lettering and design/illustration.

Kathy Welsh works in all media, from jewelry, to painting, to visual journaling. She also knits, quilts, and generally plays with anything that looks interesting and fun.



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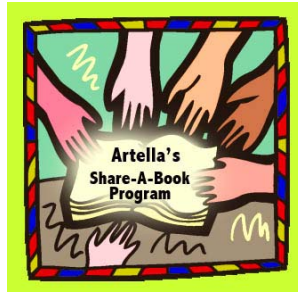
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