

# Out of the Past & INTO MY FUTURE

BY MARY STERK



I am a very future-focused person. Laying out plans and envisioning my future is something that comes easily to me. While that can be a wonderful quality, it also means I have to consciously work to be present in the moment and to honor my past. Working in my art journals is an amazing way to connect with the here and now — to get lost in the moment while playing with color, texture, and meaningful words.

## PRACTICE & PLAY

Art journaling has been a part of my life for several years, allowing me to practice and play in an environment with no rules. I use my journals to try out new techniques, supplies, and color schemes before committing them to a canvas. As a self-admitted travel bug, I also love being able to grab a journal, and a few supplies, and take my journaling on the road. I have created art journal spreads at a café in Paris, on the beach in Hawaii, and in my own backyard, incorporating ephemera from each place into the spreads. »

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#### AN INTRODUCTION TO SEWING

Last year I attended a workshop taught by Kristen Robinson at the Create Mixed Media Retreat in Seattle, Washington. This was my first introduction to using sewing in my art and in creating fabric journals. I fell in love with the idea of creating an entire journal from nothing but a pile of fabric, paper, canvas, muslin, and tissue paper for the pages. I bound the book with embroidery thread using a three-hole binding technique.

Normally, my art is full of bright colors and vibrant eye-catching work. I wanted to challenge myself to use a color palette that was foreign to me: vintage neutrals. This color scheme of neutrals, tans, pinks, and light blues is punctuated occasionally by a pop of orange and green. I used a variety of mixed-media techniques to make this journal, including painting with acrylics, collaging, stenciling, stamping, wax embossing, sewing, incorporating photography, and writing. I used some beautiful vintage lace to wrap around the journal to tie it closed.

#### PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

This journal is a visual representation of my life and my dreams. My past is represented in some of the personal ephemera, and a compelling vision of my future is captured in the journaling itself.



DETAIL



The ephemera used is a mixture of unique items from my past: a check my grandmother wrote me more than 20 years ago before she died, my own birth announcement, lace from my nana's sewing kit, newspaper clippings from when I was born, and pages ripped from my childhood diary. I also brought in items from the present like magazine text clippings that resonated with me, purchased decorative items and pictures, buttons, and patterned tissue paper from my favorite place ... Paris!

Each page of journaling touches on the things that are important to me: family, love, meaningful work, creating beauty in the world through art, and inspiring others toward their own best future. My future goals and ambitions are entwined in the writing, connecting the vintage and time-honored feeling of the journal with my forward-looking vision. I love the way this journal brought it all together, respecting my history, roots, and past; creating joy-filled present moments while creating it; and journaling about a future that compels and inspires me! ❖

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## TIPS

- Make it personal by infusing yourself into your work, and your inner beauty will shine through on your journal pages.
- Try something new — a unique color scheme or new art supply forces you to exercise your creative muscles. Who knows what you will create when you try something different?
- Dedicate space to journaling if you can. I have a separate space carved out at home so I can focus on journaling without the many distractions that are in my studio.
- Experiment with many journals. I have at least six of them going at one time, and they are full of different styles and techniques. That way, whatever my mood, I can grab an art journal and create what feels right in that moment.
- Consider a blank page to be a gift full of possibility, promise, and fun!
- Make a journaling on-the-go bag filled with small bottles of matte medium, glue, a few paints, a paintbrush, a black inkpad, small stamps, a couple stencils, a small stash of collage papers, your favorite journaling pen, and your journal!

