

A PEEK INTO *the Life of an Artist*

BY KISMA REIDLING



I am an artist. I am a writer. I love, love, love art journaling because it weaves together my two languages and becomes a record of my life. I've always kept a record of my life, which began with a diary — the first at age 8 — and then became journals, that turned into travel journals, then into scrapbooks, and then into the formal “art” journal.

THE SOUL OF CREATIVITY

It was Picasso who told us that art is the diary of an artist — he got it partially right. He never knew about art journaling, did he? Otherwise, I am certain he would have said, “Art journaling is the diary of an artist!”

Many famous artists are known for their art journals filled with sketches and studio notes. Leonardo da Vinci and Frida Kahlo are well-known for theirs, which are worth peeking into, but theirs were a different type of art journal — they were not used for therapeutic art.

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Today, art journaling is a serious creative endeavor, with a host of supplies, books, and classes available for everyone. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “Life is a journey, not a destination.” In art journaling, we often hear it’s not about the finished product but rather the process; this is the soul of our creative process, and the more we create, the deeper we go into who we are.

A PERSONAL RECORD

I do feel that an art journal is a healing tool; it is like a best friend who really listens, and maybe that best friend is a therapist too, who really sees us. The coolest thing I’ve experienced is that I get to see me — my truth — on the pages. There’s a lot that goes on between the covers of my journals. (Oh gosh, that could certainly be taken the wrong way, couldn’t it?)

An art journal gives a real peek into the day-to-day life of an artist: our trials and tribulations; the things we celebrate, that make us happy; our greatest worries and regrets; our losses and times of sorrow and mourning; our breaths in to regroup; our exhalations of letting go of what we can’t control; our blessings, hopes, wishes, visions, and dreams. Art journals highlight who we are as a person. »

Creative Obsessions

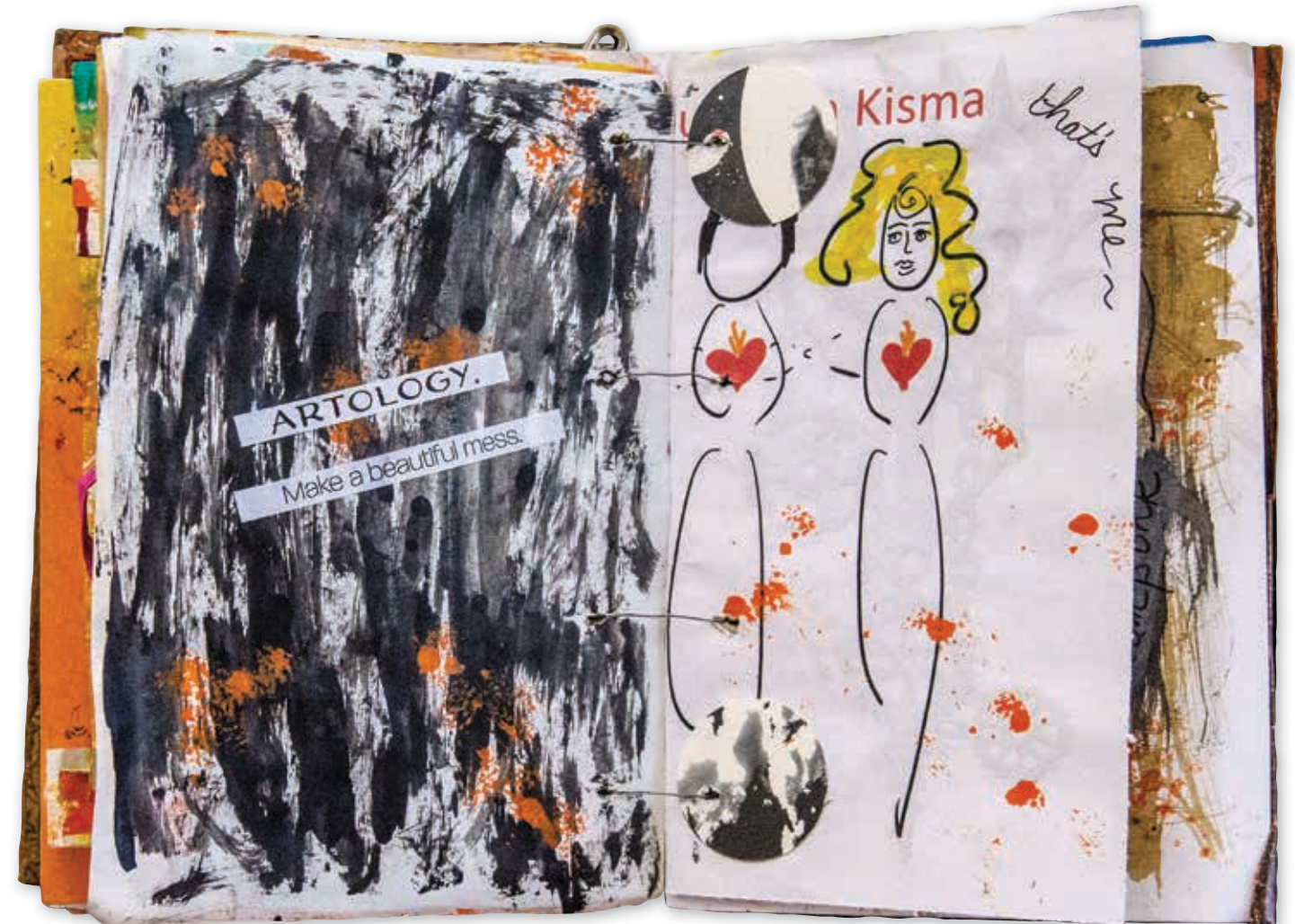
I am obsessed with oil pastels right now, whether used alone or as an accent in an art journal or on a canvas. Oil pastels are so versatile and give a deep-dive exploration experience.



EXPLORING FANTASY

Sometimes, I make an art journal just for the fun of it, like this Steampunk journal inspired by Linden Labs 19th-birthday celebration theme (Linden Labs is a company I am involved with as a virtual 3-D and digital immersive artist). I didn't have time to build for them in June 2022 because I decided to create this journal instead. But in a way, this art journal summarizes an area of my creativity over the last 13 years.

I became obsessed with the creation of this journal and didn't stop until it was finished, which took the entire month. Steampunk designs are filled with clock faces, nuts and bolts, mechanical animals, and insects, as well as converted wagons, carriages, and people in corsets, top hats, and monocles. It's a sci-fi world of the Victorian Age — turn-of-the-century filled with fantastic visuals and everything rusty.



TIMEWORN TOUCHES

To add the rust throughout this journal, I used a simple recipe for faux rust created by Sarah of The Farmwife Crafts. I used this technique to “rustify” the nuts and bolts of the adornments and the wire binding. For items that would not rust, like paper, I used Ranger Patinas in Rust, Ochre, and Onyx, which grace all but one page in the journal. The other specialty item I used was a copper paste from Art-C Mixed Media Products.

MY CREATIVE PROCESS

Originally, I always bought art journals, my favorite being the Dylusions square journal, but now I also love creating my own and seem to do so more for special projects like this one. I don't typically do heavy collage, but in this journal I loved mixing many of my digital photographs and art along with texture pages from my stash to create a page.

Making this journal was a fantastic dive into figuring out how to make the wire binding work better. Next time, I'll use rings or thicker wire, as paper just doesn't like moving easily over flimsy wire that gets little kinks in it. In the end, I learned to simply manipulate the wire with my finger to the center of each folio as I turned the pages; this causes me to slow down and really appreciate every single page as I look through the finished journal, and I like that.

In hindsight, aside from the binding wire, I wouldn't do anything differently because it's a product of my creative process and contains my thoughts and beliefs — yeah, I can definitely add it to the “record of my life” collection. »



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TIPS

- Don't be afraid to get messy with patinas, as it adds to the aged look.
- It's OK to be both random and planned-out with a page; both have their place in art journaling.
- When you find yourself in the ugly-duckling stage, pick up another medium and add it to the page in three places to create cohesion.

Kisma Reidling lives in Newport Beach, California, where she spends most days in her studio or taking long evening walks on the beach with her husband. Visit her website at visionaryartistpath.com for more information and contact details.

