
Living a More Creative Life: 30 Ways in 30 Days with Courtney Cerruti

Chapter 1 - Living a More Creative Life

Overview

(dramatic motivational music) - Hi, everybody, welcome. I'm Courtney Cerruti. I'm an artist, an author, a shop owner and I've been at Creativebug since the beginning. (dramatic motivational music) The thing that I hear from a lot of friends and family, and people out in the world is that you seem so busy, you're always doing things like going to the library and to the museum and while that's true, I think a lot of people can do that very easily and it's a way to kind of turn this creative switch on in your life. It's a way to be and see in the world. This month is about living a more creative lifestyle, 30 ways in 30 days. (dramatic motivational music) I, by no means, think that my lifestyle is the perfect lifestyle to live, but I have to say that I allow myself to indulge all of these creative pursuits in a way that allows me to experience the world in a really authentic and amazing place for me. These activities are easy, they're not complicated and you can totally integrate them into your lifestyle. We'll talk about things in your city that you can engage in, that are free, and easy to do. We'll talk about some simple activities that you can do in the few spare moments you have. We'll talk about setting time aside for yourself to indulge in something you've always wanted to do. I'll talk about how to reframe your focus in the world and encourage you to take a new perspective. Some things are silly and some things are fun, and some things can be serious. This is open to everybody. You can be a seasoned artist, you can be stuck in a rut, you could've never approached creativity in this way. Something will resonate and instead of having to make time for this thing, it will become second-nature and it will change your way of seeing and being in the world. - [Voice Off Camera] Courtney Cerruti, creative life, chapter one, segment one, take one. - We'll talk about setting time aside for yourself to, to what? - [Voice Off Camera] Nurture your creative spirit? (laughter) (dramatic motivational music)

Day 1: Blind Contour

- Welcome to to day 1. I'm gonna start with one of my most favorite activities. This is my favorite way to draw these days, and it's great for somebody who's never even picked up a pen or a pencil or a crayon. You can do it with kids or adults and the results are always hilarious and so delightful. We're gonna do a blind contour. Throughout this month, I'll be working on Strathmore paper. This is a drawing paper. It comes in a pad. It's one of my favorite papers to draw and do image transfers on. And you can do a blind contour of anything. It could be the person sitting across from you at dinner, it could be an entire room. We're gonna do a little still life, and I'll just explain kind of how you do a blind contour. The concept of a blind contour is that you are tracing the contours of the objects you see. You are not looking at your paper, which is really hard to do, and you are not picking up your pen, which is also really hard to do. Think of this as one long piece of yarn or one long string of spaghetti or something. This is one of the most fun activities. I did it on almost every first date I went on for a couple of years, and I made my parents do it the other day, and it was hilarious. It's also a great thing to just do on your own in your own space. So I'm gonna start probably with this back vase. And things are going to look wonky, and I'm not gonna look at my paper. I love these leaves. I got them from my little local flower stand. They didn't know what they were called. They only had two of them. So I'm trying to just draw the contours and if I miss something and I have to go back, you just draw a line through to where you think that space is.

You're not picking up your pen. You can do this with a crayon or a marker. Doing the parrot now. I love this ceramic parrot. He shows up on so many of our Creativebug sets. Moving to this bottle. And you can see that if you were doing a person's face, how crazy it might look. And that's why it's so fun. (laughs) (laughs) This leaf kind of fell off, but you can tell, it looks like a leaf. The bottle, the bottom of this bottle is missing. But yeah, it's just like one of the most delightful drawing practices, and I almost prefer drawing this way. I've actually drawn some flowers recently where I like my blind contours better than I actually like my drawings where I'm looking at the paper. If you haven't done this, you must do this. Do it with a friend. I've been doing these for decades, and insisting that friends draw with me. So here's one of my friend Garret, and here are some of his drawings of me. I have to warn you that teeth always look really creepy in these drawings. But it's fun, depending on the marker pen that you're using and kind of how often you do it, you'll see that you develop a style for the way that you draw in this method, which has really no sense or rhyme or reason. Everything always looks amazing. You can, of course, do still lifes. This is my teapot. This is something that I like to do while waiting for dinner to come. This is from a Chinese restaurant. The person I was with drawing me, me drawing the person. It's also a really fun activity to do at a museum. I was recently at the Oakland Museum looking at the natural history wing and you get an opportunity to draw animals that don't move. Here's some bears that were really fun to draw. These were little bear cubs. Actually really love how this grizzly bear turned out. It's funny what you wind up not drawing and not connecting the lines with 'cause you're not looking at your paper. Some funny little foxes. This raccoon is great. Scrub jay. Sometimes things look a little crazy, like this aspen. Like really, who knows what's going on there. The thistle. Just a variety of different kind of California animals. This one's a bird. It's a crane. I drew him a few times. So is this ring-tailed animal, which wound up looking a lot like a chihuahua, which was kind of funny. I'm trying to be really mindful to not look at my phone when I'm out to dinner and whoever I'm having dinner with goes to the bathroom or we're waiting for our food, so I started this thing called the book of Joe. That my boyfriend's name is Joe. And I've just been doing blind contours of him while we're waiting for our food to come. This was him watching a Giants game, and I was like, great, I'll just draw you while you watch the Giants game. You can see that I filled some of these in with watercolor colored pencil, which is a fun thing to do is to start with this as your drawing and then add some detail. You can even set up your own rules, you know. You could start with your blind contour and go back and look at your paper after you've done your initial drawing and add in little things. If you knew him, some of these mannerism are so him. It's just like really funny what you can capture. This one has a buffalo 'cause that was on the wall behind him. This is him watching the TV, which was, you know, mounted on the wall. But I just kind of continued doing these in all the different places. I think the ones where you add color can be really fun. I really love this one. He has really long fingers, so just kind of goes like this. Maybe you do a whole entire sketchbook just of your dog or the same, you know, your kitchen table every single day. You've always wanted to start a drawing practice and haven't, this is the way to start, because establishing the habit is what's hard. It's not about the drawing. If you draw, you'll get better, regardless. The blind contour kind of takes the pressure off of how things look. And it's seriously one of the most fun activities. It's why it's kept me interested and why I've been doing it for 20 years. I encourage you to do it right now. So fun.

Day 2: Daily Observations

- Today's activity is about observing. So if that's already a habit or practice for you, that's awesome, you're ahead of the game. But it's not something that necessarily comes second nature to a lot of

people. For me, I set myself up with a challenge to do a color a day as the way of keeping a record of my daily life that wasn't too intense. I didn't have to write a paragraph and a diary, I didn't have to make an entire painting in a day like I was doing last year. And this little challenge, I post on Instagram, it's called The Colors of 2017. And in many ways it reflects what happened for me in the day, either by the color or by the little bit of text that accompanies the color. If we look at just this page, I have this color and it says the Dude and Kiki's drink of choice, White Russian. I happened to watch the "Royal LeBowski" that night and my business partner, she loves to drink a White Russian, so, a White Russian. - What'd I say? (laughing loudly) That's amazing. I did not even hear myself say that. - [Director] I was like, we are not getting called for that. And, action. - Fingertips blush with cold, which is this like, that's the color, that's the color right there. One of many shades of skin, that was MLK Day. Your eyes G-R-N. I asked my boyfriend what color does your eyes say on your driver's license? And his response was G-R-N, so that's what I wrote. She was blue-black, this was from something I was reading at the time. And, above all I will miss her voice. And for me looking at these colors it really does remind me of what I was doing that day. It's a nice reminder as opposed to taking a photo. I like the combination of color and text. But, it's easy and it's simple. Whatever your daily observation is, it could be anything. This is what's working for me now. It's gonna change in a few months, I'm sure. If you need a starter, there's this great book called, Syllabus, by Lynda Barry. She's an artist, a graphic novelist and an instructor, an educator. And she has this exercise in this amazing, illustrated book, which is, it is a syllabus but it's a very unusual version, heavily illustrated. She talks about writing down six things you saw, six things you did, something you overheard, and drawing a little scene if you have the time to do so. It's still early in the day so I haven't seen or done much, but let's just take a couple of minutes to do this activity together. The idea is that you're not spending 15 or 20 minutes, you're literally taking two minutes and writing down the first things that come to mind. So, six things I saw today. First thing that comes to mind, I saw a girl standing on top of her van on the freeway taking a photo. And she was causing a lot of traffic. And she had red hair. I have to think about six things I saw. It's like so early in the day, I haven't done anything. On my way across the bridge, I saw the San Francisco skyline. Because, that's not always the case. There's usually fog. There's also a little notice on the bridge that says you how long it's going to take you to cross. And today it said, disabled bus... in the left lanes. And that was just a funny wording. I love those little electric signs because they only have so many characters and usually the phrasing is very strange. I saw Charlie backlit by the sun when he was running outside. I saw Leana in her red shoes. And last, I really like Devlin's kind of jadeite green shirt. So, I'm going to write Devlin in his jadeite. Maybe that will be my color for today, also. Jadeite green. It's a very particular green, it's not minty, it's got a little bit more blue. So, things I did, I brushed my teeth. I'm starting with that because I can't really think. I ate peanut butter pretzels, which I realized I eat every day at ten o'clock. I yelled at Charlie because he ran into the street in front of a car. It's not my proudest moment, I was very sad and scared. I held Joe's hand when we were waiting at line at Pete's, and that was nice. And, I said, "Happy Solstice," 'cause today's the solstice. And last I watered my new tomato plants. Which I don't think you're actually supposed to do in the morning but it's gonna be a hot day, so I had to do it. And something I overheard. And I didn't overhear this today, but I wanted to make note of it. I heard it this weekend. This little girl said to her dad, "This is my first... steepest adventure." She was walking down a really tall hill. And I thought that was so funny. Oh, adventure. It was the cutest, it was actually when we were camping and I turned around and I was like, I think mine, too. That list seems pretty basic. It's still really early in the morning and I haven't really attuned my head and my thoughts to be thinking this way. But

that's why this practice is important. Because if you have to do this every single day, things will start to pop out at you. You'll be listening to other people's conversations or little snippets of things will come to you and you'll be like, oh I have to save that for later. You might even want to carry a little notebook in your bag so that you can jot those things down as they happen. I haven't gone outside yet for a walk but I usually see a lot of things. And these lists will become richer and more interesting. They're a great reflection on what you've done for the day. But they also can be gleaned from later when you're looking for text or ideas for starters of scenes or books or art pieces. And they become a great resource. So it's about establishing the habit, whatever is the daily practice is for you. And don't over-commit yourself, don't do 100 days or commit yourself to an entire year. Just start, start today, start with your list and see where it leads you.

Day 3: Be Prepared for Creativity

- These creative prompts are about setting you up for success to be the most creative that you can be in whatever life that you live. Today's idea is about being ready because what are you going to do when you have that extra minute? I challenge you not to pick up your phone when you have a few minutes. Instead I encourage you to draw or write down your daily observations, doodle or just pick up a book. I thought I would show you how I'm ready and do a purse dump. How crazy is that? I actually switched from a purse to a backpack. It's more balanced. I feel like a little kid sometimes, but that's okay. I love this backpack. It's pretty compact but it has a lot of awesome pockets. I've got my style icon on there, Molly Ringwald. Let's see what's in here. Tissues, always. (upbeat music) And actually, it's not even tissue. It's a little roll of doggie bags for (mumbles). Matches from one of my favorite places whenever I need a mini vacation, I drive to the coast and have dinner at this place. It's called Do Arts, and I picked up a pack of matches. Lotion, always handy to have. A tangle of wires for listening and charging. Those are kind of a necessity. But then I have a couple of my favorite new pens. A micron and this really cool little micro pen that's a bit fancier. It has an okra colored ink in it. And of course a tape measure because you never know when you might need to measure something. Side pockets. A little hand sanitizer. What else is in here? This is actually a little tiny spray bottle full of water for using my water color palette. Two of them. And a bottle of acrylic ink which I love to draw with. A water brush. And randomly, some playing cards that I picked up off the ground the other day. These were scattered all over the place, but I thought they could be interesting to draw on top of if I had a moment. Most importantly, let's see what's inside. Course, my wallet, which is ever expanding. A really small sketchbook. I go through lots of different types of sketchbooks. I'm hard pressed to commit to one always. Put something in your bag that is easy to access. If it fits in your pocket even better. And have a pen handy. These are some blind contours of my friend Angela and her son Oliver. And then I let me friend Alicia's daughter who's three, draw on top of them when I was out to dinner with her. Again it's a good record of my day, but most importantly it's here when I want it, and it's a really fun way to spend your extra time. Makeup bag. Way too many keys, but I have my shop tag on there, Long Weekends. This book that I'm reading, Ted Hughes Crow. I've got a little thing to remind me of my local library hours. Notes of things to bring from home. Happens to be on a page with a blind contour. Baby wipes which actually are one of my go to art kinds of handy dandy things. I have so many packages of these all over my house. They're great for keeping brushes moist, if you're not ready to wash them out. They're great for spills and messes, but you can use them with watercolor. I actually keep a little tiny water color set in my bag too. So if I do have an opportunity to paint, I have everything I need. This one happens to be a folding Schmincke palette and because I have my waterbrush, I don't need to have an extra

source of water. So these things go together. I have another little mini sketchbook. It doesn't matter that these things are watercolor friendly or not, you can still play with your watercolor in cheap-o sketchbooks, that's fine. Allergy pills. More tissues, none of that's really that exciting. The point is, when I do have a minute, instead of pulling out my phone to check Instagram, although I love doing that, I like to pull out a sketchbook instead. Like I said, write down some observations, maybe listen a little bit to what your neighbor sitting next to you might be saying, and write it down because you never know when those things are going to come in handy. And again, it's another way of just tuning in to the world around you in a way that engages with it, allows you to be more observant in your daily life.

Day 4: Change Your Perspective

- Today, I want you to literally change your perspective. I want you to look up and I want you to look down instead of looking straight ahead. Think about what Charlie sees when he's walking down the street. Our Creativebug offices are in downtown San Francisco in a very urban area. There are a lot of tall buildings outside and I'm always walking down Market Street, looking up at these historic buildings with these beautiful sculptures and statues on the roof. Sometimes I see someone washing the windows or on the building taking a smoke break. If I look down, there are plaques on the ground, sometimes there are historic marks. There are lots of cute little dogs. And it's an interesting way to navigate your space and look at it in a new way. If you're not in a place that has a lotta tall buildings, instead take the elevator, look out the window, go to the top floor of your space. We love to get our afternoon coffee here in the office, so we often walk to Blue Bottle, sometimes I walk to Blick Art Supply, and there are lots of little interesting alleyways on the way. And, of course, you could disregard what's happening in those alleyways, but instead you could really embrace and look with new and fresh eyes at the buildings, the architecture. Sometimes there are really beautiful shadows on the ground from the trees overhead. There are really fun things like old signage on the side of buildings that haven't been painted over. You might see somebody doing something interesting. Of course, it's easy to look up and look down when you're in a brand new space, but the challenge is to be in a space that you already know and are familiar with and change your perspective about navigating that space. So, if it's your walk to work every day or maybe it's just going into your own backyard and just looking at it in a new way with fresh eyes.

Day 5: Urban Rubbings

- One of the ways that you can look at your space in a new and interesting way is by seeing the textures and the different ways that they can apply to art-making. This doesn't mean that you have to draw or paint, but instead you can make rubbings. This is a super-easy way to engage with your landscape, even just your own home and finding textures in everyday objects. We're gonna take a walk outside on Market Street in front of the Creativebug office, which is hustling and bustling with tourists and street performers, people with sign, people trying to go to and from work on their lunch break. And we're gonna look up and we're gonna look down and we're gonna find places to make rubbings. All I need for this is a couple sheets of typing paper or copy paper and a crayon that has all of the paper peeled off of it. We're gonna take a look at the sidewalk and we're gonna see if there are any interesting textures or impressions in the cement. We're gonna look at things like metal grates, anywhere where steam comes out, where you cross the street, if there's any interesting bumps. There are historic plaques on Market Street that talk about the Barbary Coast Trail, and we're definitely gonna get a rubbing of those. Some of these textures might be really

interesting, and some of them might challenge your expectations and not be that great, and that's totally fine. It's about the experience and changing your perspective. Like I said, looking up and looking down for yesterday, and getting all of these textures. We're gonna do this outside, but you could do this in your own home. Maybe your couch has a really interesting texture or there's some kitchen utensil that you never use and you're curious what kind of mark it will make. I could do this in a sketch book, I could cut this up and make a collage with it, you could make photocopies and turn this into a zine, it's just a way for you to create a new visual language with the textures around you.

Day 6: Become a Collector

- I highly advocate starting a collection. It doesn't have to be something big or grandiose, it could be something little, it could even be something you already have that you didn't realize was a collection. When I was thinking about all the different ways that I live my life, and the things that I love to do with a deep passion, collecting things is definitely at the top of the list. Now I'm not gonna show you everything I collect, I just brought in a little bit of a sampling. And they can be small things, like I said, they could be things that you already might have in your home, but the concept of creating a collection or establishing collection allows you to become a curator and have an editing eye. You don't have to collect all the pencils in the world. So what are the pencils you are gonna collect? Do they have interesting type on them, have people chewed off the erasers, do they have brightly colored erasers? These are the things that you're gonna bring with intention to your collection. I also love to shop, there is no secret there, and I love to go to antique stores and I love to go to thrift stores and hunt for things. And having a collection in mind allows me to not be overwhelmed by what I'm looking at, gives me a budget, and allows me to go on a treasure hunt for that one item. I started a passport collection because my dad gave me my grandfather's passport from San Francisco. And it's really super beautiful. My grandfather was born in 1909. It's got a photo of him, it's has his signature, and it has some of the different places that he traveled. He went back to Italy for six months when he was 17 with his family. And there are even some little notes from the consulate in here. And I thought this was such a beautiful artifact of a time and a travel and a life no longer here, that I thought, what other passports could I find? So I started looking. Sometimes I pick them up at flea markets, I've even looked on eBay for this one in particular I got. This is so tiny, I just love the size. It has a photo. A lot of penalties and clauses in a language I don't read. But I love the little stamps, the months are in here. And it doesn't take up a ton of space. It's just really beautiful. I have my first passport, which is expired. I remember the day that I took this photo. My signature has changed tremendously. And it has a lot of different countries on it 'cause in high school, I went to France for the summer. So I love these beautiful visas and titles and things. There's a French passport. This one is from France, it was issued in 1954, again it has this great still of this very handsome gentleman. The writing from country to country is really different, as are the stamps, and the thing that people focus on. After I started this collection, it made me kind of alert and aware and looking for passports. So I happened to be at an estate sale and found this fake passport that this little boy did, probably for a school project. His name's James Lindsey. It's got his height and his eye color. He has these little stamps that he drew with crayon. And I just thought it was so sweet. It's tacked down with these little brass brads. And if I didn't have that collection in mind, I probably wouldn't have seen this, I would have been digging through whatever bin I was looking at at the estate sale, and I wouldn't have picked this out. I've got one more here. This one's a woman's passport. And again, you can see how different the papers are, the handwriting, and it's a fun and

easy collection to start. They're not that common that you find them all the time, and my house isn't gonna be overwhelmed with passports. And for me, it started with a personal one, something from my family history. I also collect photo booth photos. If you've seen my zine class, you would have seen this, because I used this to make a zine. I love the photo booth photos. They're different now, mostly people are using digital photos. There are big ones and little ones. There are even ones that have been hand-tinted with color. Sometimes they have writing on them or on the back of them. And they're just really special, and again, fun and small to collect. Another thing I collect is foreign language dictionaries. Usually used bookstores are full of these and they're very common, but occasionally, you can find some really interesting tiny ones. This one happens to be English and German. It's like a red leatherette, and the type is so, so tiny, I just think about whose pocket this was in. It's the Midget Series is what it's actually called, which probably would not be continued to be called that today. It's a little folded page. Sometimes you find little things tucked into the pages. This one is the Collins dictionary. You can see that they've published many of them. I have it in Italian, Latin, and French. But like, look at this one, it's tall and skinny, it has an alphabet index, it's copyright is 1898, and I could probably tell you what I paid for this: \$10. Most of them are two or \$3. This one is just really old, it's survived over a hundred years, and I spent the price of two coffees on it. I love this one, it has really interesting typeface. It's the Handbook of Japanese Conversations, and it actually has phrases, and even little pictures, which is super unusual. Shall I take things out? What have you got in this box? What have you got under there? Definitely waiting for an opportunity to say, "What have you got under there" when I got to Japan, but now I know how to say it. And this one's an English Spanish dictionary, it's probably from the '70s. Just this super funny, retro typeface. Somebody translated all of the currency here in the front, so they obviously took this to Spain with them or maybe Mexico. How fun is that? Last, I also would advocate displaying your collection if you can. I've been collecting tassels for a really long time. I think they're really beautiful. They tend to be very inexpensive if you pick them up here or there. There are all different kinds of tassels. These are these fun, kind of more pom-pom ones that make me just think of some opulent 1960s powder room. Certainly this one is from the '60s. There are different textures and colors, and I hang them on things, I actively use these. They're often hanging on doorknobs, often there's more than one hanging on a doorknob, and they're just a fun little reminder. Your collection could be displayed in a frame or in a shadowbox, you could hang it on the wall. And last, you don't have to actually purchase anything if you don't want, to have a collection. I'm not saying that you should become a hoarder. Maybe this is a little boarder line, but I honestly, seriously, collect wrappers that are fancy and shiny. They're usually from candies from different countries. But the graphics are so interesting. Like I said, I love the shiny bits. We had Mark Tilling, who was a British chocolatier in the office, and he brought all these amazing British treats including these tunick cakes and I saved the wrapper. I told everyone in the office, don't throw your wrapper because I love them so much. My mom often puts this other brand of Amaretti cookies in our stocking, and I love these fringed edges, they're just so delightful. These are some Italian candies that my dad had. This little Japanese candy that has this cute little girl's face on it. God knows what I'm gonna do with these things, but they don't take up a lot of space, I have a very tidy system for keeping them in this little shoebox. They could be cut up and collaged as a background. I think they're really interesting, like I said, for typography and for graphics if you're into that kind of history. They're a great sample of how things are packaged. I'm really interested in the way things are packaged and what is communicated through text or through image, especially in something that's in a language I don't know. Like this one's in Cyrillic, it's a Russian candy. But it has these composers on it, someone playing a piano,

someone with a standup bass. It's just super interesting to see how people will communicate what's inside. I love this one because the color orange is so, so pretty. Whatever your collection is, it could be something small like a postage stamp, like I said, it could be pencils. It could be something a little more grandiose. Maybe you have one beautiful etching that means something to you, maybe it has some history, or it's just a beautiful aesthetic object and you wanna grow your etching or print collection, and I encourage you to do so.

Day 7: Check Out Your Local Library

- If you haven't been to your library recently, you should go. It's an amazing place full of free books. What's keeping you? You should actually check out your local library program because a lot of libraries are trying to get their patrons back right and waving any old fines. So if you've checked out 20 books when you were eight and forgot to return them and you have \$30 worth of fines, guess what? They might wave it for you. But go and check it out. You can use the computers, you browse the magazines, and you can check out books. There's also DVDs, a lot of libraries offer classes and other programming like lectures. The public library main branch has a lot of amazing exhibits which are free to browse through. And it's an incredible place. It's a place of quiet, it's a place of study, it's a place of research, and it's a place of discovery. Many libraries also offer evening hours which how I go to the library. I'm usually there two or three nights a week. And I have library cards for where I work and for where I live and for where I play. And also I belong to a private library that's here in downtown San Francisco. It's amazing, it's a 100 bucks a year which for me is worth it. Depends on how you wanna spend your money but it allows me to go to the library up until nine o'clock at night, many nights a week. And this particular library, which is called the Mechanics' Institute, is walking distance from my office and they have the longest running chess room in the country. Which even though I don't play chess, I haven't since I was a kid. I love that history and I love the building and it's a beautiful place to be in. Which you may not know is that most libraries use the Dewey Decimal System that probably sounds familiar to you but what may not have occurred to you is that that means that you could walk into any library and find the same types of books in the same sections. And what do I mean by that? This is the main library collections guide. Most libraries at their information desk will have something telling you the layout of the library and maybe how their collection is organized. So if I wanted to look at philosophy books, I know that there always in the 100s. Now probably that's not what I'm gonna be looking at. I'm probably going to be looking at art and craft. So I know that the art books are always in the 700s. 700 to 799 and actually craft is usually in the 740s. Check out the literature at the information desk because there might some other things that you're interested in. For example, the San Francisco main branch that there are five stories in the building so I need to know what floor the collections are on. A lot of libraries have really interesting ephemera collections. You can't check them out but you can browse them in the library. For example, my library has these ephemera collections of clippings so they're 18 century engravings from newspapers and articles. And they're by subject so there's a little folder and you can just look up dogs. And I found this great little image of a dog that looked like Charlie from about 1805 and it was a Spitz dog and I never heard of that. And it was right after I got Charlie so that was a fun little discovery. I often don't go to the library with a particular book in mind. I like to just browse through the sections and just see what speaks to me. Sometimes I'll pull off a book that has really old looking spine and be curious about what the cover looks like. I'll flip through it and I'll put it back. Actually most libraries don't recommend that you reshelve your own books so pay attention to that. If you have a huge stack, just leave them in the appropriate place for reshelving. I'll

show some of the books that I got on my recent trip. This one looks sort of, I'm assuming, but it's British ferns and I love books about ferns. And actually the plates in this are really incredible. The plates are where the illustrations happen. And they're really rich in color. They're probably some kind of offset lithography process. And it was such a delightful find. I was so happy that this very brown book had all this beautiful green ferns and plants inside. Another book I found is this book called *In Bloom*. And it actually has one of our CreativeBug artist in it who's a paper flower maker, Livia Cetti. It's about different artist who work with flowers in different ways. It could in ceramics, it could be painting them. One of my favorite painters is in here actually too. This woman, she's a French artist named Claire. Let's see where her paintings starts. Claire Basler and she does these huge incredible floral murals. They're all hand painted. This is her working in her studio and it has some beautiful interior shots. Nature that inspires her. Look at that, it's like Queen Anne's Lace for 12 feet. It's pretty incredible. Look how delightful that is. These are little tiny yogurt dishes or yogurt ceramics that have all these different colors of paint in them. And this is her. Here's the CreativeBug artist, Livia, who makes incredible paper flowers. She actually has a new book that just came out this month. She lives in New York, has pictures of flowers in her own home. This is my favorite flower that she makes, it's a geranium. That's her. It's a really, really stunning, it's just a nice source of inspiration. It was a totally unexpected find and I didn't know that this book existed so that was a happy accident. I often check out the kid's book section because guess what? In the kid's book section, crafts are also in the 740s. Anything in the kid's book section usually starts with a J for juvenile so it's J in the 740s. And I found this really fun origami book. It's pretty old, it's from 1964. It's kind of like an alphabet book which I collect but has these really fun infographics and these kind of primitive drawings which are really awesome. And it also has the word of what you're folding in three different languages. So that was really fun. I like to look at graphic novels sometimes because the illustrations are incredible. Just look at that. That just the center spread, no words. This is little vignettes that this graphic novelist put together based on a made up town. And I just think they're so pretty. I love the color palettes, I love the brush stroke and the style of illustration. I might have to get a copy of that for myself. This is a book called *The Lover's Dictionary*. It also sort of reminds me of an alphabet book which I love. And it's organized in that way, alphabetically. And I'll just read you a little bit. This is breathtaking, an adjective. Those morning when we kissed and surrender for an hour before we say a single word. It's completely smitten from the first page. And I read this pretty quickly. You can maybe see some of the topics I'm interested in. A lot of flowers, plants, and then craft books usually. Often I'll just browse the fiction section too and see what's new and that's a great source of inspiration. Just to pick up, maybe you're gonna read it, maybe you won't. This is *The Complete Book of Flower Preservation*. This is from the Mechanics' library. This is an old book so it has these really funny outdated 1070s illustrations. Which are just fun to see. This book also, you would have no idea from the outside how fantastic it is. But it's on the decorative arts of Sweden. It is in white and black which is something that you get from a lot of the art books from before 1980 or 90. They'll be a couple of color plates but usually they're black and white images but it's still pretty awesome. This is a very graphic book so the black and white doesn't seem to take away for it. And this could be a great source of inspiration for motifs or patterns, shapes. It's kind of a survey of all the decorative arts of Sweden. And there are some color plates in this one. Which are really fun. Even just in the red, I love that. And while I was leaving the kid's section, I thought I had everything I needed and then I saw this book. I don't know if anybody remembers this. These were these series of books that came out, I think in the 50s and 60s, and it was like this is London, this is France, this is Italy. And they're all put together in this one encyclopedia of his work and his

illustrations are incredible. So this is really fun to have. I haven't had a chance to flip through too much of it. I love all the cats in Rome and the coliseum. And just the way the cars are drawn, just amazing. So amazing. Another thing I love to do is when I'm traveling, check out the library which may sound silly but often libraries are in historic buildings and they're worth seeing just for the architecture. The New York Public Library is really, really fantastic. And you can even get a library card only if you're visiting. I think it lasts a few months up to three years if you're visiting but then you can check out books if you need to. Let's say you're staying for a week. You can use the computer. I often don't travel with my laptop so it's nice to be able to have computer access if you need it if you're not going to be using your phone. You can pop into the library. On a super hot day, it's just a nice place to rest or pick up a magazine if you need to. So if you're traveling, give that a thought. Maybe check out the library there. See if there's a specialty library. Often there are specialty collections that have special library. So it could be something with an art focus. I even heard of libraries that have like a cookbook focus which could be really, really fun to visit. The library has a ton of resources in addition to e-books and music. You can also access their other databases. Sometimes they have photos that are archived. As well as genealogy help if you're trying to do some family history. I encourage you to go and get a library card. It's really an amazing space and it's one of my favorite places to visit.

Day 8: Play With Color

- This activity is centered around painting, but you don't have to be a painter to do this. This is actually the perfect thing to do if you have a brand new palette or you're just starting a painting for the first time. I have a few different palettes. I always travel with with a lot of palettes. This is a pretty complete one. It's foldable and it has tube paints that I've squeezed out. I'm gonna show you this activity with a slightly smaller palette. This one is one that I customized when I was in New York, it's by Kremer Pigments and it has some really interesting metallics and neons. And what we're gonna do is pick one color in our palette and mix it with every other color and it allows you to see how colors interact with one another, give you some new ideas for color combinations that you maybe not have thought of and it also gives you a good practice for playing with watercolor. You could do this with acrylic paint or oil paint. You could try it with colored pencils, but you have to work a little bit harder. I'm using an eight round brush, just 'cause it's a nice big size. And the color that is going to be the basis for all of this is gonna be this cobalt blue turquoise. I think it's deep. I'm just gonna do a big circle of that. And you might want to write the name of your color. You're gonna do this with Anne too. You can see how rich and saturated that color is. So that's my base color. I'm not gonna take a little bit of that color and mix it will every color in my palette. You're going to see what I'm talking about in just a second. So load my brush up with the blue and I'm just gonna go clockwise. We're gonna pick up a little bit of this green gold color. I've got a lot of water in my brush. I'm just going to add some more green gold. Little bit more. Little more. And you can just do a single dip. You could really draw this line out and get every tiny little shade that can happen between those two colors, but I'm just kind of doing this as a quick practice. You can even add a little bit of water to see what a lighter version would look like. I'm gonna rinse my brush really well. Kind of clean off that color, rinse my brush again and then put that color in its truest form right here. So you can see how we go from the blue tone all the way to its original color with way more yellow in it. If you like you can also start with little bits of the blue right on the edge here. Sometimes this is nice too, just to give yourself a way to space your colors. So now we're gonna go dip into this metallic color. I just want to make sure it's pretty clean. Gonna put your most pure form of the other

color on the other side, and then start. Just trying to see some of that metallic. (calm music) And rinse out your brush. I'm gonna continue in this method starting with my purest blue color, adding the next color in my palette and working across so I can see all the different variations in color I get between the blue and whatever color I'm working with. I'm working in this sketchbook that has watercolor paper. I really like Moleskin brand, this one happens to be Handbook, it's another one of my favorites. Strathmore makes a watercolor sketchbook which is really great too. You just want to make sure that you're doing this on some kind of paper that will take your water color medium. I love all these rich plum colors that you can get, in this color combo. Just move onto the next page. How satisfying is that? This is so pretty to look at. There's no pressure to paint something and I learned a lot about the colors in my palette. I would do this with every color in my palette which are two, four, six, eight, 10, 12, 14. So save yourself 14 spreads so that you can do this and see the range. It really makes you think about when you go to buy a palette and you only have six colors all the colors you can create from that. I love all of these beautiful mossy greens that happen here. These like super crazy fluorescents that happened just by mixing this blue with the fluorescent yellow. This blue tends to be a like kind of more opaque chalkier color naturally, it's not a gouache, but it kind of looks like one and then so you get some really interesting tones in the middle of these ranges. The plum tones in this red to blue is stunning. I also really like the fluorescent red and all of these weird kind of color separations that happen with the pigments. Of course they're really fun to mix with the metallics. Even the blues which I thought would be a little bit lackluster. It was interesting how this blue creates kind of an opacity to these more translucent blues and especially indigo which is really nice so I can get these really pretty kind of slate blues in the middle of this range. I did something similar for the fluorescent red although I haven't finished this palette and you can see where I'm working across and then I just kind of played very loosely with some of the colors I really liked which is indigo and red and the oxide and chromium green and the red. So you can see kind of adding more water what that would do. Again you should definitely do this right when you buy a brand new palette because then you can see its capabilities but I often do this just when I want to explore new colors, get new inspiration or just need something meditative to paint. I feel like painting but I don't have anything in mind. This is a great thing to do and just sit down and get paint to paper. Because could you imagine if you had a bunch of sketchbooks just filled with these? Pretty amazing.

Day 9: Buy Yourself Flowers

- Something I try to remind myself to do every now and again is buy myself flowers. If you're waiting for that perfect bouquet from some boy or girl, it may not ever come. I think the best flowers I've ever had I bought myself. So it's nice to indulge in that treat. They don't have to be expensive flowers and best of all, I've been buying them a lot recently to draw from. So I thought I would share with you how I approach drawing my flowers. It's very quick and loose but allows me to do some blind contour if I want. I do a little sketching technique I'm going to show you instead, and also I can pull out the paints. I'm going to start just by blocking out some bigger shapes and this is a different palette I'm working from. Just mixing a color that's kind of similar to what I'm seeing in this little flower. I don't even know what this is called. I'm going to go back and draw on top of this. So this is just about getting color and shape down. I'm not actually leaving those white edges, that's fine. That is too complex and I'm just about starting this and keeping it loose and fun. Gonna run out of room for the vase, that's fine. I'll just make it a little shorty. The color on these carnations which I completely bought to draw later because they're so cool, they look stripey. The color's a little

different than these flowers. I'm really like drawing with my paintbrush. It's like a mass of ruffles, sort of. Do my jar. I'm totally out of room to do this awesome protea. I could leave it out and that's fine but it's so much fun, I'm just going to squish it. I'm just going to make it tiny and pretend like it's sitting right behind these things. It's fine to do that. No one's going to see what this looks like and you're not even going to care. You're just going to have this like fun painting in your sketch book potentially. And the activity doesn't even have to go that far. You could just buy yourself flowers and can enjoy the scent and the way that they look. There's no pressure to draw them. I just like doing that. Especially because then it makes them last a little bit longer. I'm onto these crazy like leaves. This is the center of this protea is super wet so everything is bleeding and that's fine. This all looks a little crazy and it's totally okay also. I was going to try to do like a little hint of the vase back here. So that protea looks like it's sitting in something. I'm going to move down the table line. I'm going to actually I'm looking at it, it's much higher up, but that's fine. I just want to put it down here. You can see how loose this is. I'm going to let that dry. Then I'm going to come back to it and draw on top of it with a nib pen and ink. I love drawing with a nib. It's kind of scratchy and crazy. You can use whatever drawing implement that you prefer. I'm going to use this with acrylic ink and the difference between the acrylic ink and something like watercolor is that it's going to dry and be permanent which means I can paint on top later and it's not going to pick up any pigment as if I was using a watercolor ink or a watercolor with a fine brush. The nib pen has a fork in the middle so when you apply lots of pressure, you get a thicker line and when you lift up pressure, you get a thinner line. I'm going to start by just drawing these flowers here which have kind of an irregular shape. It's sort of somewhere between a blind contour and just a drawing. Sometimes I'm looking at the flower and sometimes I'm just kind of continuing the motion. (upbeat music) I love how kind of wild and crazy this looks. It reminds me of Ralph Steadman if you know his illustrations or Quentin Blake who illustrated for Roald Dahl which I just love how like wild and loose they are. (upbeat music) I'm going to move over to the center of this protea. It has these sort of like little pills, these kind of like regular little things inside the center bloom and they're just kind of like rows or ridges of scallops. (upbeat music) And then next I'm going to draw these leaves. They have this really cool kind of zig-zaggy edge. (upbeat music) If you get any inky blobs, you can dip into that ink. It's fine, I'm not worried about it at all. I'm just going to keep going. And then for my carnations, they have these really beautiful little stripes. I can add some of those. I'm just gonna try to get sort of the petal shape. (upbeat music) The point of this was to just buy yourself flowers and you can totally do that. You don't even have to purchase flowers, maybe you can pick some on your walk home. They're really beautiful. They're sort of like the art that's in nature and it's nice to bring them into your home every once in a while. You can take this as far as you like. You can of course sketch it or just even make a color palette to inspire you.

Day 10: Read a Picture Book

- I have always loved kids' books. I loved them as a kid, loved them as a teenager, and I continue to love them as an adult, and I've collected them all the way through. When I did my study abroad in France, I spend most of my free hours in the kids' section at the library there, because the illustrations for foreign kids' books were so amazing. And in the States we've really caught up. You can find some incredible children's books with some really beautiful illustrations. It's kind of mind-blowing. I was gonna walk you through some of my favorites from my collection. This is by no means all of the greats that are out there. But I recommend that you check out your local library or go to any bookstore and just browse the kids' section for a little bit of inspiration. I think it's really

nice to kind of indulge our inner child every once in awhile. This is Swami on Rye: Max in India. Max is this dog. And this is by Maira Kalman, and Maira Kalman now publishes a lot of books for adults. All of them are illustrated. She's a contemporary artist. I remember when I bought this book in Monterey in 2005. That's many, many years ago. I love how integrated the text is with the images and how it really plays a role in telling the story and in the visual feel of this book, of all of her books. You can see with the way things are capitalized, with the way they move around the page. Sometimes they're entirely in the illustration, and sometimes they're going around the illustration. The story of this is really awesome as well, but just the illustrations alone are incredible. In fact, a lot of the books that I have are in foreign languages, languages I can't read. I don't even know a single word, but that doesn't make any difference, because the illustrations are what inspire me. Look how lovely this is. "We passed women dancing." This is a book I recently picked up. It's called A Walk in the Forest by Maria Dek. I think this is her first book. And I think this is all painted, but something about this made me think of just playing with marker pens. I felt like you could easily kind of get some of the similar feels using just kids' marker pens, and how freeing and fun that is. I love the use of the negative space. There's very little text in some picture books, and definitely in this particular one, so the images really have to speak for the story. Look how beautiful that is. These shapes are so simple. She's just using these blobby circular brushstrokes to illustrate trees seen from above and this big blue field of color for some kind of lake, and then it just says, "And deep." I love that. This book is really fun. It's called A Lion in Paris by Beatrice Alemagna, and it actually opens horizontally, which is kind of incredible. The illustrations are right up my alley, of course. The text is on the top page, the illustrations are on the bottom. There's a mix of some collage of kind of photographs and some drawing, some of which is very loose, some of which is a little bit more structured. And I love the collaged elements on top. So, so beautiful. And even this, this is almost defaced. There's this woman here. She's clearly cut out from a vintage magazine, and then she's literally drawn on eyelashes and put rosy cheeks on her, and it works with this spread. It works so well. I love this little guy who was probably just a piece of brown paper cut out, and this cage really just built around him. So fun. You can look at the places where there's a lot of texture and places where there's no texture. It's a beautiful book. I picked up this book recently. It's called Mrs. Kennedy Goes Abroad. There's actually a photo here of Mrs. Kennedy. This book was originally published in 1998, but I love how the type and the illustrations feel super 1960s, which is relevant to the time that all of this was happening. It's so great; I love the color palettes. The texture. Some of it makes me feel like it's very Wes Anderson. There's something just about the structure of the pages and the illustrations themselves. I love how flat the perspective is. This one of the Taj Mahal, so incredible. This book is called Flashlight by Lizi Boyd. I paid \$6 for this in the Friends of the Library bookshop. You can see how striking these illustrations are. It's super monochromatic. We're working on black paper. It's probably gray gouache. This might even be digitally made initially. And then there's just these little flashes of super bright natural color light. There's even cutouts in this book. This book has no text, but instead it tells its story in images. There are little cutouts. And I also love the endpapers, like these little mushrooms. This is The Hare and the Tortoise. It's one of those classic children's fables, but I really love this book because of the illustrator Brian Wildsmith. I got this from the Rubber Library and Flower Bodega in New Orleans, and I packed it in my suitcase. (laughs) I love how fun these illustrations are. And, again, this can just be to inspire you. You can just read the story, you can just absorb the pictures, and that can be where this activity ends, but I thought I would do a little bit of drawing in a style that is not like my normal style and just pick a page and kind of pick out the colors or do some little sketches that are referential to the images. I love this

with the animals stacked. I think this is the page that's gonna be the most inspiring for me. And instead of using paint, which is my normal medium, I'm just gonna use colored pencil. Even though this is painted, I just feel like making some of these marks would be fun in colored pencil. I love just these little tiny repetitive marks all over. And you can see that there are patches of color. So this is very yellow-green. It moves into this blushy tone. We get some more sagey greens here. I can copy that, I can let that be the thing that inspires this, or I can just notice it and see what happens. It's too blue. Something more minty. These flowers are really like little Cheerios. This is done with paint, and sometimes they're just little dots. I'm gonna do flowers that are more like my own flowers, which are like weird little wobbly clouds. We'll do some blocks of color that are really just little scribbles. Just come back in here now that I have some flowers done and fill in some of these spaces. Just wanna add a little bit of yellow in here. And that's enough. I can just use that as a little study that's inspired by this. I might wanna write down the name of the artist and the title. It depends on how closely you're kind of referencing it. This would be a really cute little card or just a little moment in your sketchbook, and it makes me think of spring, so I'm just gonna write, "Hello, Spring." And that's it. Kids' books are really enjoyable on their own. You can let the illustrations and the story just kind of wash over you, but you can actually hunt or seek them out and get inspiration for type, layout, for illustration. It's really fun to look through different decades and eras of illustration and see how they change and shift. And picking up a kids' book is never an indulgence I would say no to.

Day 11: Collect a Color

- Just like we've been honing our skills to observe or see things differently, today we're gonna focus on color. So pick a color, any color, and I want you to see it out in the world. You can photograph it, you can make notes of it. If you're a writer you could just write the different colors and kinda what those experiences are. Because I'm very visual, I'm gonna actually collect color and kinda of note it down on this piece of paper. I'm using that same Strathmore sketch pad that I love so much, but I'm gonna be just kind of gathering all kinds of things. I've got little bits of paper, and fabric, and ribbon. Some of those fun wrappers from my wrapper collection. I have some markers, and pens, and even paints. Whatever way to represent color that feels good to you, that's how you should do this exercise. Start with this. (playful music) I love the library. This is a little bit of a library card. They don't really use those too much. I'm using my favorite glue stick, which is a Scotch brand Craft Stick, which is a Scotch brand Craft Stick. I'm just gonna do this by kinda making little swatches. It's a good way to kinda see what I have in my arsenal of tools. See what kind of colors, I can compare all the fluorescent yellows. And again, it's just super visually satisfying to do this. It's a fun way to play and engage with all of your fun art supplies without having to have pressure of drawing something specific, or making something. Got my water brush so I can even do a little bit of paint, if I want. Ooh, so vibrant. Can push my concept of yellow. And these aren't perfect. I'm not making perfect circles, or squares, or any shape. I'm just kinda laying stuff down. Hmm. Figure out how to add that later. Hmm, I didn't think that Sharpie was gonna be that color. Can even use acrylic paint for this. You could just use your finger. Can use that piece. I could also cut out a piece that has more yellow. Kind of whatever I want. I like that piece, actually. I'll just glue that down with Craft Stick also. I'm doing this grid fashion 'cause I find that really satisfying, but you can approach this in any way. It could be very organic and kind of meandering. You could write the word yellow in all of these little samples. Maybe I'll pull this up and do the same thing. Like how the tape is not too fat if I tear it in half. Doesn't obscure my sample too much. But the tape itself can be its own swatch on here. Little Starburst wrapper. I'm just gonna work until I fill up the page. Like a mailing bubble wrap envelope.

That's really similar to that color. I think that's it. I think I've exhausted all of my yellow. At least for the materials I gathered. But you have those really pretty, super textural spread that allows you to kind of see yellow in different ways, kind of stretch what you think is the definition of yellow. This color looks really super orange in this particular palette, but this was the color I used, which is totally a yellow pen. I did the same exercise with red. And it's just as satisfying to look at. I've got acrylic paints here. Some oil pastel, washy tape, colored pencils, pens and markers, paint, ribbons, another Starburst wrapper, little snippets of paper cut out from magazines. I even had some red nail polish in my backpack, and this was the top of a bag from a fashion store down the street, and I just snipped off a little red dot. Whatever your approach to this project, it's a way for you to hone your observational skills, and interact with your world in a more direct and specific way. (playful music)

Day 12: What Can You Do With 15 Minutes?

- Today is the thing that we never do. It's the thing that we always put off and we don't allow ourselves to do. Which is, taking 15 minutes just for yourself and not making any excuses. Not saying, "I'll do it tomorrow." Or the next day, which becomes a week becomes a month, becomes a year later. And really spending that time to do whatever it is that you need to do for yourself. This is a little bit of self care for your mind and your body and for your creative spirit as well. This could be stretching for 15 minutes in the day. It could be sitting quietly with no phone and no television, no computer and just having your tea. It could be going for a walk if that's something that you really wanted to do and you feel like you're not getting enough of. For me, it's been reading. I listen to a lot of audio books and they're amazing and I love them but there's something about having a book in your hand and I'm with books all the time, every day. I look through them constantly and often I'm just looking at the pictures. But I am deep into this great book right now. It's actually for kids. It's called *The Secret Keepers*. It's by Trenton Lee Stewart and I've been spending 15 minutes a day every day for a week at lunch and just taking the time to be really immersed in the world that he is writing about. And taking that moment to really be there and be present with my 15 minutes that are just for myself. So I encourage you to indulge in whatever it is that you've been putting off. Whatever it is that you're saying you're gonna do tomorrow or the next day and take the 15 minutes today and take them tomorrow and take them for the rest of this week and do that thing.

Day 13: Go For a Walk

(water rushing) - I'm in Yerba Buena Gardens, which is just next to the SFMOMA. We're close to the Jewish Contemporary Museum. And we're just a stone's throw from Creativebug. This is one of my favorite places to come on my lunch break, get some sunshine, although today it's a bit overcast. There's lots to see here, there's really beautiful architecture, beautiful plants, and, of course, good things to eat, and lots of people-watching. (rhythmic drum-beat) I'm gonna find a space where I can just sit down, and maybe sketch a little bit in the 10, 15 minutes I have before my lunch break is over. Do you wanna go this way, or do you wanna go that way, Dev? - [Dev] Let's go this way, over by that waterfall. - [Woman] Okay. (Dev speaking too far from microphone) (laughs) Those would be super fun to draw, but I wanna find a place where I can find more things. Is there a bug on your shoe? Oh no, it's a little bit of grass. - [Dev] Ants. - Do you hear that? There's like opera music. - [Dev] Yeah. (happy calm music) (water falling) - I love all these flowers, everything's in bloom right now. (happy calm music) This guy's so funny, he makes me laugh, 'cause when Charlie was a puppy, it used to terrify him every time we'd walk up these stairs. (happy calm music) - [Dev] Yeah, just keep going. - I really love this spot. Everything's in bloom right now. It's really beautiful. There's all kinds of

textures and colors. There's a little bit of architecture if I feel like drawing that, but mostly I want to do some floral studies. Maybe kind of jot down with some paint, the different colors that I'm seeing. I'm gonna ignore the jackhammering and maybe put my headphones in. I have a little traveling watercolor set here. This is a koi set, I think, of the biggest one, the biggest size. And it has a little water brush so that I don't have to have a separate container for water, I can just use this to paint with. And I didn't bring a watercolor sketch book. I'm just using some drawing paper but I don't care. And just use what you have, that's the best thing. (slow piano music) Find a fresh spread here. I'm actually gonna start by doing some blind contours of flowers and I'm using a micron because once this dries, I can paint on top of it and it won't smear. (peaceful piano music) - [Dev] Gonna do anything else? - [Woman] Yeah, I'm gonna do a bunch of stuff. - [Dev] Okay, go for it. - I'm gonna draw these other little fun tiny flowers. (slow piano music) I'm gonna leave this space open for some color study, and then I'm gonna flip to a new spread. I'm actually gonna draw these flowers into Faith, who's standing there, reading a catalog. (laughs) Same blind contour, so it's gonna look wonky but that's so fun. So behind that, is Faith. Here's her hands. Sort of this magazine. She's got this great new haircut with lots of curly hair. Who knows what this looks like, but. (slow piano music) You remember, that a blind contour, you can't look at your page and you can't pick up your pen. (laughs loudly) Oh my god, that looks insane. I'm gonna finish off her coat now that I know where I was. (slow piano music) Her bangs are much lower. So I might just add to this, so it looks a little bit more like a person. (slow piano music) Maybe just add a few details in her face, here. That looks nothing like Faith, hopefully she'll forgive me. But I'm gonna go back to my flower page and just do some color studies with my water color. Centers of these kinda daisy-looking flowers are just like really deliciously vibrant. (slow piano music) And there's not really a good way to paint white, but there's actually a lot of grays in white so maybe there's some tones like that in those flowers. We've got my sunglasses on, so these colors might look a little different. And I don't have to get the color right every time, on the first try. You can look for the lighter colors in what you're observing. The darker colors in what you're observing. (slow piano music) It's a little blue. (slow piano music) So that's about right. (slow piano music) And let's move on to the greens that have a little brown. (slow piano music) This one. (slow piano music) And there are these purples. There's the deep purple kind of at the base of the flower. (slow piano music) Maybe something a little darker. (slow piano music) I really love this like venetian red mixed in with this kind of purple color. It's giving me the kind of tone I want. It's a little bit more concentrated. And then there's definitely a bluer purple for the actual kind of lavender part of the flower. Lavender color, that is, not actual lavender plant. (slow piano music) This may be a little muddy, but that's getting closer. (slow piano music) Yeah, and maybe I wanna record some of the great tones of the cement that's here. (slow piano music) It's like the darker bottom ridge. Some more water for the lighter tone. (slow piano music) And then I always try to label everything, 'cause I know I'm gonna forget. I actually keep this tiny, little vintage pencil in my watercolor box. I'm just gonna make a note, Yerba Buena Gardens in bloom. (slow piano music) I love just taking a few moments on my lunch break to record what I'm seeing. Everything's in bloom right now, but of course, this is gonna change as the seasons change. Some of these plants might become really and kind of brown and oakery tones as we move into fall and then winter. And it's nice to just write down, just take some color combinations from nature. It's really funny that purple is one of my least favorite colors except for in the natural world. Purple is so spectacular. It comes in all these amazing shades and it's always paired with really interesting bright greens and deep, deep purples. You can get this like incredible range. So it's nice to make some color notes to kind of invigorate your palette. And take that 10 or 15 minutes, just a walk around the

block can make a huge difference. Even if you don't get a chance to sit down and sketch something or do a blind contour. Be observing. Think about what you saw, what you heard, textures that you saw. The architecture around you and just take in your space in a new way. (slow piano music)

Day 14: Indulge in Magazines

- Today is also about indulgence. I encourage you to purchase a suite of magazines. Not just one, but three or four or maybe even five. Buying a bunch of magazines at once reminds me of going on vacation with my family. My mom and I would go to the grocery store and stock up on everything we needed for our apartment or house for the week, and we'd buy a ton of magazines, probably some nail polish, too, 'cause we were gonna paint our fingernails, and I just love kind of luxuriating in that. You can get into bed, find a warm, sunny place in your backyard, curl up on the couch, and just look through magazines. You can commit to reading articles. You can just look at the pictures. I'm gonna share some of my most favorite magazines that I always try to get. The first one is actually I think considered a zine, which if you don't know what a zine is, you should check out my zine class. This is called Put A Egg On It, and it's out of New York, and it's a food zine. I don't cook that much, not as much as I used to, but I love food magazines. I love the photos. I love the ideas. This one is great because it has a lot of stories about foods and their significance in families and memories. Pink popcorn is one of my absolute favorite indulgences. It's probably pretty disgusting to most people, but I love it. I also love that this one is all, it's full-color, but it's printed on this mint green paper, which is really fun. I mean, who doesn't love this? This dude who looks like Burt Reynolds is in his cut-offs loading the dishwasher. And this is actually the only magazine that I have a lifetime subscription to because I love it that much. There's a local magazine shop in Oakland that I'm on the list, that every time this magazine comes in, they give me a call to let me know that I can come and get it. It's usually a couple months behind because it's coming from France. This is Marie Claire Ideas. It's their craft magazine. This one is for Easter, so it's a little bit past the season, but I still love it. Sometimes I read some of the text and try to brush up on my French vocabulary, but I love seeing what's familiar. There's a lot of trends that come through here that are very similar in the United States. Often, there will be books that I know and new books for me to look up. I love the project ideas. This is like a fun paper flower wreath that are succulents. And I may not do anything in this magazine, but it's a new source of inspiration, both visual, I can also read whatever passages I'm interested in or whatever stories I'm interested in. And it feels like being in France for a moment or two. There are things about it, of course, more and more with the internet, worlds are colliding and overlapping, but there are still things in this that feel very European to me, and I really like that. Also love the last page of this magazine. It's always what's coming in the next issue. There are a lot of magazines where the last page will be reserved for a little kind of anecdotal story or a memory. The last page of a magazine is always a really great place to look. This is my newest subscription. This one I picked up, and I fell in love with this. I was picking it up over and over month after month. It's actually a San Francisco-based magazine. It's all about travel. There's a lot of food, and it's a really affordable magazine for travel magazines. It's only \$6.99. Most of them are around \$15 or \$16, so I like that it's very accessible, the photos are awesome, there's great recipes in here. A lot of really good travel tips. And I hadn't heard of this. I just picked it up on the newsstand, and like I said, after buying it several times, I decided to actually subscribe. So fun. Moveable Feasts, and all that great spread of taco trucks and food trucks. This is a classic. I feel like this inspires a lot of people. This is the World of Interiors, and you know, this is aspirational. I probably won't live in a palace ever or have a house where every single wall is hand-painted. Although, I would love to live in a house

where every wall is hand-painted. But I like that element of kind of being taken out of my space. It's sort of like what a movie does for a lot of people. Totally immersing myself in a new place. I like looking at different color palettes. There's a lot of deep blues in this one. I love this little spread on ceramics. That's such a great pattern. That's totally something I can cut out and use later, maybe draw from, gain some inspiration in my sketchbook. I love all the bright, vibrant colors in this spread. This is not a color palette, these jewel tones are probably something I wouldn't necessarily go to when I'm making some art, but this would be a fun thing to pull a color palette out of. This is amazing. This is about an artist, Antoinette Poisson, or a studio rather. They block print these incredible patterns and then they hand-paint them. There's a studio in Paris that does this. You can actually buy some of these little swatches at John Derian in New York. They're hundreds of dollars, so I don't own any, but I have this beautiful little article that shows me the interior of her space, this delicious little stack of texture and color, some of her collections. I love this. This gives me a great idea for taking a single element and sort of massing it out in this very demure way. This makes an impact as a whole, but the framing is very delicate. Again, this may not be a practical application. This is a little bit more aspirational like I mentioned, but it's just really fun. You feel like you go on a little vacation. You explore worlds that you don't necessarily get to in your everyday life, certainly not in the 15 minutes that you're sitting down to look through these. But it's so beautiful, and it's something that you can keep or cut up or donate after you're done with it. This guy's a local one. This is San Francisco Cottages & Gardens, and I really like gardening magazines or things with animals. I like to use the images for transfers later on. A lot of this is advertising because it is local, so maybe not all of this would apply, but that tulip is stunning. That would be a great thing to paint or draw. But I love this lavender. It's what caught my eye on the cover, and I think that would be a really fun packing tape transfer. I allow myself to be very indulgent. I spoil myself all the time. If something makes me feel good, and it only takes a few minutes to do or costs just a little bit of money, then I'm all about that. It could be having your morning cup of coffee at your favorite little place that you go out of your house to go get. For me, sometimes it's indulging in an entire set of magazines, like a big fat stack of them, so I can go home and sit on my couch and just browse through and be transported just for a few minutes.

Day 15: Press Plants and Petals

- There are many ways to be present and observe your space around you as you take a walk, or just navigate the outside world. And one of the things I like to do is not to pick flowers necessarily, but to pick up petals or leaves that have fallen and keep them as a memory of part of my walk. And I usually just put them in a book that's in my backpack and I wanted to just show you how easy that is to do. These are actually fallen rose petals from my Grandma's rose garden. And you could, of course, get plant press and do it that way, but I just like to tuck it into books and then I feel like it's a little surprise when I go to read the book, or you might dedicate a book just to the pressing of plants, and that's fine too. I probably won't be reading this particular book. So, I usually just put a few on a page. I don't want them to overlap. You don't really wanna press things that have already dried, so some of these petals that have this kind of black edge, I probably wouldn't press those. You don't want things that are too thick or have too much moisture because those can mold, they can stick to your pages. We'll just do three pages. You could even make a note on your paper, in pencil, where these are from if you wanted. Or maybe the season. But it's kind of amazing. The color won't remain exactly the same. They'll start to get a little bit darker. But it's fun to see kind of what plants will remain really true to their color, what will keep it's shape, and then you can use pressed

plants in lots of different ways. You could tuck them into a little note, create a book mark out of them by laminating them. There's a lot of things you can do with them, or you can just keep them in the book, which is what I usually do. I wanted to share with you some that I pressed earlier this week. Actually just had bought this book at a little used book store, because I thought the size and the color were so pretty. Wasn't sure if I was gonna read it or cut it up. So, I had it in my backpack and I was walking through a garden, a rose garden, and there were some fallen flowers. So this is still sort of fresh. I would recommend maybe check on them in a week or two. This has just been a few days, but already you can see how flat this is. I really wasn't sure how it would press because it was kind of a chunkier, kind of more succulent flower. And I actually really like how this stamen has pressed out and the way the petals are. And we'll see if it retains it's color beyond this really pale pink. I have some other guys in here too. Ooh, I love pressing hydrangeas. They press really nicely, especially the ones that are kind of modeled and spotted. These ones are just pretty plain white. But I don't mind these little imperfections in the leaves. So I'll put places on this side. And there's some little rose petals and they're still drying. So, right now, they've retained their color really well. Probably in a week or so they'll be a little bit darker. I think that might be it in this little book. You wanna look for a book that has kind of spongier pages, nothing that's clay coated, like an art book, or has a lot of pictures or anything. Just because I don't think it dries as well. Something that has a little bit, sort of, absorbent paper assigned, dictionaries work great. And then once you put them into your book, I would stack a bunch of books on top so that you get nice and even pressure. And then check on them in about a week.

Day 16: Go to a Museum

- One of my most favorite activities is going to the museum. (upbeat music) I love to do it on my own. I love to do it with a friend. And a long time ago, someone asked me if I was religious, and I was like, "Yes, I am." "Art is my religion and going to the museum "is sort of like going to church for me." It's a very sacred space. There's a sense of community if you want it and it's a place to kind of be reflective and also find inspiration. I actually went to Catholic school for several years and going to church felt like that. I was always looking at the stained glass windows and the paintings on the ceiling and so there's some kind of link there for me. I totally advocate becoming a member to a museum if you can. And the reason is there is no pressure when you visit. You don't have to see everything. You can pop in for 20 minutes and see your favorite piece. You could hang out in the cafe and sketch or go have lunch. The San Francisco MOMA is really close to the Creativebug office so we often will go there on Friday. They have a beautiful patio with doors open to the outside and you still get the sort of museum experience in the buzz and the excitement and also some of the calm of going to the museum without even having to see anything, just having a delightful lunch there. In fact, most museums have really great cafes and restaurants. So check that out in your neighborhood. You don't necessarily have to pay an admission fee or be a member to enjoy the cafe or the museum. A lot of museums also have outdoor spaces like sculpture gardens or parks around them which are free to browse and experience without having to pay an admission fee. In San Francisco, there's a new law where any new construction requires some percentage of it to be dedicated to a public art space. So at the SFMOMA, there's this really beautiful Richard Serra piece. It's huge. It's this incredible maze made out of steel at these kind of interesting almost intersecting angles. You feel completely consumed and absorbed by the piece when you meander to the center of it and it's totally free to the public and it's a place that a lot of people don't often take advantage of. The reason I love being a member for all of these things is because I often get to see shows

before they open to the public. I get to experience all of that early which is super fun and exciting. A lot of museums have late night evenings so you don't have to take time off work or go on the weekend when it's really crowded if that's not your thing. You don't have to be a member but it does support a great cause and it's actually not that expensive. If you're a teacher or a student, you can get a discounted rate, or Brian and I went in on a dual membership for the SFMOMA and it was half the price and we can bring up to three friends each. I encourage you to check out your local museums for this kind of a thing. I love the de Young and the Legion. This is one of my membership cards. The Jewish Contemporary Museum has great exhibits. They have a lot of evening programming and speeches and other things that you can participate in. It's just down the street from us at the Creativebug office so I'll often go on my lunch break and just pop in and visit a show maybe once or twice or even three times because being a member allows me to do that. Now if you don't have the budget or you're really far away from your local museum and you can't be a member, that's totally fine. Pay the admission fee and see an exhibit that you're really excited about. Go check out the permanent collection. A lot of museums have a really really large collection but only part of it is on display. That actually means that if there's a piece there that you really want to see and it's not on display, you can make an appointment and have a private viewing of the piece itself. Not a lot of people take advantage of these things. I still haven't done that yet. I'm a little intimidated but I really want to do it soon. And if you don't think you can afford the membership or you don't think you can even afford a single ticket for the day and that's fine, maybe it's out of your budget this month, check out your local library because a lot of libraries have museum passes for museums in their area and you can check them out on a 24 hour basis. Often they're a family pass which means you could go with a group of friends or just go on your own in the middle of the day which would be awesome. So check out your local library and then you can visit the museum for free. A lot of museums also have free days. Now in the last case that you don't live anywhere near a museum, you should talk to your local council and see if you can get one. But if you can't do that, a lot of museums have an online digital collection which means you can access them from your home on your phone if you want. A lot of them have Instagram feeds which is really fun and it's another way to explore the collections all over the world but in the privacy of your own home. It may sound silly or it may sound scary to go to the museum if you haven't done it or maybe you always go to the museum already and you already know this information, you know how special it is. I really cherish this as one of my most favorite things to do. I love to do it in the evening on a late night by myself and I get to see people enjoying art in a new way. Sometimes I'll sit down and draw something I see. It's an endless source of inspiration and calm for me when I need a little boost in the middle of the week.

Day 17: Partner Up

- Sometimes when things are really exciting or really scary I get intimidated and I don't do them. Sometimes I'm my own worst enemy and the best cure for that is partnering up with a buddy so that you have someone you're responsible to, someone who can meet you at the coffee shop and do that thing that you're fearing to do on your own. That's definitely true for myself. Whenever I'm wanting to embark on something new or dive really deeply into something I've been a little timid to put my toe in the water then I just ask a friend and say like hey, do you want to do this with me? That's how I get to bring that thing into fruition. I wanted to share some of the collaborative projects I've worked on with friends. This is a zeen called Hey Sweets that I did with my friend Alicia Dornadic. I did the paintings and she did the copy. So these are kind of little paintings of candy, real

candy that you might find. And little snippets of conversation that go with the candy. It was really fun because in some cases, she saw the paintings and in some cases she wrote the text first and did not see the paintings and we paired them up after. Like this one. This is a ringpop, which for me, totally reminds me of being the sixth or seventh grade. I feel like they came in a million flavors. You'd suck on them and then really your finger would be sticky and it wasn't really that fun. And the text says, "What's that? What? On your face. What? Where? That's just my face. Oh." This one's fun. It's got the little cinnamon bears which actually always reminds me of my grandma, cinnamon hearts and some licorice. These were really fun to paint. I remember painting them. This one is fun to do with a friend. We actually did the zeen reading and Alicia read this one out with her brother and it was like a sing-song rhythm. This one is a sugar cube. It might not be something you think of as candy but I've known Alicia for a really long time and I knew that her grandma used to put a piece of sugar in the back between her teeth when she would drink tea and so I added that because it kind of speaks to our history and it was like our collaboration together. That's just one example. Another fun thing to do is draw with somebody else. This is a good way to just kind of get you out of your element. I always draw with my friend Mike McConnell. He often is a painter of animals and people combined and I rarely draw and paint animals other than Charlie sometimes. So when we work together, it gets me out of my box, it gets him out of his box and we wind up with these really funny pieces. This one I did one of my kind of signature girls and he added something he overheard. So if you're keeping your observations from day two about things that you overheard, this is a great place to put that text. And it says, "We didn't do anything, we just showed up." Which is what I told him earlier about something else. This one's really fun because as Mike and I have done this and posted it on Instagram, people have joined us. That's how we started Social Sketch which is a big monthly event where lots of people get together and sketch. But sometimes we do little ones where just a single friend or a few friends will join us. This is a collaboration between me, Mike, and our friend Brian whose also mostly a collage artist who uses a lot of found material. And he drew this sort of dog coyote shape from a vintage book. He wrote this text, "Bill went to find Mary" and I just colored it in which was really fun. This is another fun one where people just kind of pass this around and scribbled on it and added some lettering. This one, I actually did very little to. I think I just colored in some of the line work here with some pencil to begin with. And then actually it's really fun because Brian, when he writes, he actually writes upside down to get kind of an irregular letter form. So I love seeing his type on things because they're so signaturely his. And this is just in my sketchbook. Playing around. I did this big watercolor field. Mike added this really beautifully rendered bunny rabbit and then Brian added this, "Did Precious fall down and go boom?". It's okay to get stuck. We all get stuck. Finding ways to move through that and you know not make the best art of your life or maybe you're not even an artist. It's hard for you to write. It's hard for you to get motivated. It's hard for you to feel creative in your day. Partner up with somebody. Be accountable to them. Have a conversation. Two heads are often better than one. And definitely it's more fun to draw with a partner. So figure out whatever the project is that you wanna work on. It could just be for the duration of the day, for the week, or it could even be long term. It's nice to set goals and have a partner in crime.

Day 18: Self Portrait

- Something everyone should do several times in their life is create a self-portrait. Now, it doesn't have to be in drawing, although that's what I'm gonna show you. It could be a photograph, it could be objects that represent who you are in the moment that you take the image. But self-portraits are

a nice way to reflect on your own perception of who you are and what you look like and what your personality is. It's sort of like a time capsule in the moment, because as time progresses, your self-portrait may change. That may be how you create it changes, who you see yourself as might change, and then of course, physically, your appearance changes. There are a lot of artists that work in this medium, and it's really interesting to see how people perceive themselves. I'm just gonna do a blind contour, because I think that's the most approachable way to do a self-portrait, because it's really scary looking at yourself in the mirror with such intensity, but it's also really fun because the blind contour is so quick. I've set up a little right with a mirror in my pen box, and I'm working with a big Mr. Sketch on a big piece of Strathmore drawing paper. I like working with a crayon or a big marker. You can do tiny little mini self-portraits too. That would be fun, but I like staying loose and open for this. And my mirror, I'd like a little bit more, but this is what I can go with, so it's kind of my face, my hair, and just to up underneath the top button of my dress. Because it's a blind contour, if you were watching day one, I'm not gonna look at my paper and I'm not gonna pick up my pen. I will just orient myself so I don't draw onto the table. And here we go. Who knows what this looks like. Teeth are really hard. Ooh, I have such big front teeth. (laughing) Oh, amazing! So silly. Look at my scary teeth! And I love drawing eyelashes. They always come out like these little wings on your eyes. I don't think I have that big a forehead, but there they are. I'm gonna add my freckles, my most distinguishing ones. And let's try another one with a different color. Is there a way I can get this any farther away from me? I'm gonna do it in this big, fat yellow marker, and then I'm gonna go back over it with the purple, 'cause I think that's really fun to do. Maybe I'll start in a different place. Maybe I'll try to draw my face first. There's my eye, and those are my eyebrows. My mouth. I'm not gonna draw my teeth. I probably haven't done any hair yet, oops. It may be a little hard to see, so I'm gonna go back over in the purple, and I'm just gonna do another blind contour on top. This is something I've done with my friend Alphonso, where we'll use these Mr. Sketch markers, work really big, do one color, and then do another one, and it's interesting to see how your marks line up, where they diverge. It's just like a super fun activity. Whoa, so different. My eyes are kind of proportionately the same distance, but they're dropped down a bit. This whole face is dropped down a little bit, which is really funny. And these look like creepy hands coming out. So that's just one way to do a self-portrait. You can also spend a little more time and draw yourself a little bit more accurately. I'm just gonna show you something I did earlier. This is the same thing, the blind contour, just using my Mr. Sketch marker. This one was fun because I actually liked how it looked, and then I went in and blind contour added the pattern in my top. I just made it a totally different color, but I love the three little buttons on the dress I was wearing that day. This one was with a little bit more intention, obviously looking at my paper, looking back into the mirror, using just a really limited palette of colored pencils. For whatever reason, whenever I draw myself, I either look really old or really young. It's really hard to draw yourself. So, maybe this isn't your approach to how you do a self-portrait. Maybe you wanna take a photo instead. That's totally fine. I liked this one. I think it looks a little bit like me. It's a very loose, I used a really big paintbrush, and I tried to hold it kind of far away from myself to get a looser kind of mark making approach. I went back over my eyes with a little bit of deeper color in a few places, and I really like how the mouth turned out. I feel like it's very representational of my big front teeth, which I love. There are a lot of artists that work in the medium of self-portrait. Of course, Frida Kahlo might be already familiar to you. She is probably one of the most recognizable faces. I love her paintings. She's painted a lot of people, of course, not only herself. But I think she painted herself over, and over, and over, with all this kind of representation of what was happening in her life, and whatever story she wanted to tell. She had a difficult life, in

many cases. And a magical one, and I think that's really visible in her work, and especially in her self-portraits. And it's such an incredible marker of time, of course, and the era that she was painting, and looking at the objects that surround her, and her interests, and so forth. Vivian Maier is one of those photographers that went unknown for a very long time, and a young man bought an entire collection of her negatives, unbeknownst to him. She was unknown to the world at that point, and since then, there's been a documentary on her, several documentaries on her, and her work is out there, and you can buy prints of it. And she did a lot of really interesting self-portraits using a medium format camera. This happens to be one of them on the cover. And she was an incredible photographer as well. She worked as a nanny, and often would take the kids and her charge into New York City and photograph people on the street and kind of daily life scenes. Look how incredible this photo is. This too. So just an incredible photographer all around, but also really, really interesting self-portraits. Because she was using a camera, she was always photographing herself reflected in another surface, which is an interesting way to go about your self-portrait. But you don't have to do an image of yourself. Like I said, you could collect objects and have that represent you. There's a French contemporary artist named Sophie Calle who takes a portrait of everything she receives on her birthday every year, and she puts it in this cabinet and photographs it, and in many ways, I feel like that's a self-portrait also. It marks time, there's consistency, and it tells a story about who's involved in her life, who gives her what, and what she keeps. Whatever medium you decide to work in, take a look at yourself in a more discerning way with an artistic eye, and record that in some way, whatever is comfortable for you.

Day 19: Limit Your Palette

- Sometimes a challenge is not about making something or creating something, it's about limiting yourself and having an editing eye. And that can be really hard. Sometimes you don't know when to stop, sometimes you draw all the things and it's overwhelming, so I thought it would be a fun exercise to do whatever it is you normally do, if you're a painter, a drawer, limit yourself to a single color because these images can be very powerful and you could add color back in later. It's fun to add spot color to something that is just made in a single color way. I'm gonna draw from life the sequel of this plant. Two of my favorite drawing implements are the Stabilo All Pencil. So it's like a creamy colored pencil but you can use it on paper, glass, medal, plastic. I just really like the indigo color it comes in, and a China Marker. This is like a crayon, it has a kind of a waxy, really dense, intense kind of color and feel to it. It only comes in a few colors, primary plus black and white, and they can also be used on glass and medal. So they're something you might be able to find even at the hardware store in addition to the art supply store. I just like the line they make. They're a little more sophisticated than using like a child's crayon, but they're also really fun to draw with. I won't do a blind contour this time, I'll just draw this. So I'm looking at my paper, but I'm also not gonna draw every single leaf on this. (pencil sweeping) Can see that they come in pairs. Get one more here. (pencil sweeping) I'm drawing this really big. You could also just draw this really small. You could draw whatever you have in front of you. It could be a teapot or plates or something. It doesn't have to be a plant. (pencil scratching) On this particular stalk, the centers of these leaves are much more prominent than they were on the other stalk. Let me add a few more there that match. (pencil scratching) Become really dense in this angle. (pencil sweeping) It's a little, tiny brass cup. This looks a little wonky because I'm not sketching. Normally if I was sketching with like a pencil I would do lots of little, tiny marks before I landed on my final mark, but since I'm doing these kind of bold lines it's not so much sketching. (pencil scraping) Those leaves go right into the cup here. And

maybe, I could leave it like that, I don't have to draw everything that's in front of me. I like that it's just three. (pencil sweeping) Maybe I'll make a little table line and I think it would be nice to have something just coming out here so I'm gonna add one more, make it smaller than it is in real life. (pencil scraping) So these are kinda twisted. This is a very simple, quick illustration but instead of worrying about the shading of the greens and the tones of the gold I'm just simplifying things down to their line and their shape, which is very impactful. It's kind of like a coloring book if you think about it that way, but a lot of spot illustration is done this way in books and magazines because the printing's only gonna be a limited amount of colors, but I think there's something to be said with stripping down and taking away all of the option of color and just focusing on line and shape. I wanted to share some other illustrations that I've made this way. This is another just quick, little still life and I really like it in the blue, but it's fun 'cause you could come back in and add the spot color to it now. I would recommend making something like photocopies if you're testing out different colors, but even just playing with a two-color illustration can be really nice. Can go back in here with paint as well. This one's all colored pencil. (pencil scratching) And I actually really love the way red and blue look together. They don't have to be that very traditional, kind of patriotic color palette. You could pick a more tomato red which is what I'm using with a more soft, soft gray blue and maybe this has red on it. (pencil tapping) And you can see just by adding one extra color then you have this whole other thing that's happening but you're still limiting your focus which is really nice. Instead of being overwhelmed by all the colors and all the possibilities, you can have a more cohesive and bold illustration by just limiting the colors and if you're working from life or some source imagery where you don't like the colors, it gives you the freedom to select your own. (pencil tapping) I was working on a little series that was on Instagram, called texts to an imaginary boyfriend and every single image was drawn with this indigo blue marker, it was a simple line drawing. These are the only things I've drawn in probably my entire life that I did not use a photo reference for. It was just out of my head and it worked really well for this series. It was simple and pared-down but it was intentional. One of 'em was about mixed tapes so these are these little cassette tapes. I was trying to remember what a cassette tape looked like. This one is about a bra. But all these little (laughing) notebooks have these tiny, little, like these are corn nuts. These tiny, little drawings. This is a case where I used one additional color because I had a sunburn, so sunburn in the shape of that bathing suit. But it was fun just to limit myself to a single color in these cases because then it let the illustration speak and I felt like the color wasn't a distraction. There's a little, tiny postcard. A rainbow and a telephone, kind of in two different ways. The tiniest train tickets you ever saw. And then I re-drew them here. A lost earring, just like one I'm wearing today. (laughing) And then finally, a fellow artist was putting together a graphic novel based on a Radiolab story about this woman who observed this entire couple through the window across the courtyard. She never met them, she never interacted with them but she kind of had this whole fantasy about what their life was like and what it was no longer like once they left that apartment and I did an illustration, and the only requirements is that they had to be in just red and blue. So this was my sketch, painted sketch of what I thought a living room at night would be and this is the final illustration I did all in red and blue, and this is her living room looking across to the window that was lit up. So I think there's power and kind of a freedom in limiting the amount of choices. It's very easy to be overwhelmed by all the things that you can draw in all the ways you can draw them. Even just looking at something in real life and sticking to that color palette can be overwhelming, so if you wanted to simplify and pick a single material to work with. It could even just be graphite pencil and that would be really powerful too. It allows you a new freedom and a way of looking at your subject

and drawing your subject.

Day 20: Place Objects With Intentions

- I drink tea every day, multiple times a day. And there are things in your home that you access often that could be placed anywhere; they can be out on your counter, or they can be shoved in a drawer; but why not place them with intention? Part of having a creative eye about your space, that of course goes into your home, and thinking about how you place things and where you place them and if they're beautiful, 'cause when you walk into your house, you want it to feel like home and you want it to be beautiful. So I could easily put all of my teaware in a drawer, but instead I decided to display it right underneath my teacups, which hang underneath the shelf on little teacup hooks. I thought I'd share with you how I arrange that, because it might give you the inspiration to look at some corner of your house or your space and give it a refresh. So I have a lot of stuff here. The other thing that is really fun about drinking lots of tea, is that you can collect teaware. So a lot of this I use daily and some of it I use a little bit less than frequently, but it's really pretty and I wanna have it all kind of in the same space. So these are all different types of tea strainers. These, as well, I bought in a flea market in Paris and they are super beautiful, they're all hand-cut, these little perforations in the metal. I have a lot of spoons for scooping out loose-leaf tea. This is little tongs for a tea bag, if you happen to be serving a tea bag tea. I even made a little scoop out of ceramic. This is one of my most favorite, I don't use it... It's a little bird. And there's mesh inside. And this is just a little tiny dish, just like these are for placing your tea strainer once you're done. And this is a box. It's just a box, you could do this with anything. This could be a stack of books on your side table, it could be where you put your keys and your sunglasses when you come home at the end of the day. So this is just about taking this concept and moving it to any part of your home. All right, so I think I'm gonna hang the box like this. I have a ton of spoons, and I have this ceramic cup that I love by Cly Brown. I'm just gonna put all the spoons in here. I love these little guys. I'm also gonna put, this is a tea strainer. They're not that practical but this was a gift and I really like it. Also put the tongs there. And this can just sit in the shelf like that, and that's fine. These I use every day. I could hang them but I think sitting is perfect. And I have this lemon verbena that my friend Angela grew in her yard, that makes a really good teasan, and it's really pretty. So I'm just gonna place those inside there. These I access all the time. I can also use the top of this shelf for things. Some of the little tea strainer. Probably put these bigger objects all at the bottom. And I can arrange this, maybe I wanna have my tallest things; but for practicality I know that if I'm grabbing stuff all the time, I don't wanna damage these lemon verbena leaves, so I am gonna keep them off to the side here. That fits in there nicely. Probably put the dishes together, put them on top of the shelf. And I'm left with these items. Oh, my little bird will also go in here. These, I really love, and I don't use them that often. They're meant for a full teapot and this goes in and allows you to pull this out. So I rather would display these and I wanna be able to see them, so I'm actually going to hammer some little nails and hang them here so I can see them. So that first one is gonna go roughly here. I'm not gonna hammer with all of my very delicate teaware, so I'll just make marks and then I'll come back and hammer in nails. So that one's gonna go there. Maybe I wanna place this one here. Sorry, how did I have this hanging? Just wanna make sure these still fit. So I'll bring that up a little. And we'll put a marker here. That means I have this side for this one. Just roughly there. And maybe I wanna hang this also. Now, I'm gonna hang this higher, which means this can come a little bit lower. So I'll make my mark, see how low this goes. Make my mark in here. So we know that those things are gonna hang on the outside. That's one for easy access, but also for the things that I don't use as often, but are really

beautiful; I can display them and see them every time I make my tea, which is multiple times a day. I think the rest of these that I use often, I'm actually gonna hang inside here. Just twist that so I get a sense of where this is gonna hang. Make a little mark, so that's for that guy. And then for this one, see if I have any more room. This has not a lot of space to hang. I could put a nail here, but it would have to be a pretty long nail for that to hang. And these ones are more for pots. So maybe in this case, these things go in my drawer because I don't use them as often and I have everything I need. This is actually the tea strainer that I use most often, it works for a small pot or for a really big single cup of tea. This one will be hanging on the outside, so that I know I can just do a smaller cup of tea. So that'll be easy access. And then maybe I just pick one of these to hang on the outside. And this actually will just sit right on top of that guy. So the rest of this goes in a drawer. And sometimes you need to do that, maybe not everything is out all the time. That's a very hard lesson for me because everything is out in my house, I like to see everything. And then I also wanna have a space for this little ceramic spoon. So this is gonna hang here, and maybe my little ceramic spoon will hang there. And that area is there, so I'm just gonna make a mark. And know that I'm gonna put a nail there. So every thing comes back out, I'm gonna hammer my nails, and then we'll see how this comes together. (whimsical instrumental music) This one here. After all that hammering, we have a really pretty tea case. And it's something that I'm gonna access and use daily, so it's functional for me, but I still get to see and admire all of the things that I collect. You can add a little spoon here for easy access for scooping my loose-leaf tea. And if I wanted to still include these extra strainers, I could stack them on the top once I hang everything in place. It's still pretty and feels balanced, but it could also go in a drawer. Maybe a few of these I need to get rid of because I'm not using all of them, all the time. But I love that you can bring the same sense of intentionality to any aspect of your house; maybe there's a corner you've been avoiding because there are books piled up on the floor, like at my house. But you could look at it with fresh eyes and think about what you might wanna display, what you might want easy access to, and make things both functional and beautiful, so that when you come into your space it feels luxurious and like home, but it also is gonna work for your needs.

Day 21: Research Rabbit Hole

- Sometimes it's really fun to let yourself go down a rabbit hole. This could be a rabbit hole of hashtags on Instagram, or in my case it could just be searching a bunch of links on Google or even opening up books and checking out the references, finding those references. Whatever your preferred method of research, then feel free to do that. And I was just gonna show you what happened to me on Friday, last week I was walking past a library as I often do, it's at a Carnegie Library and I've seen that before, I know that Carnegie funded a bunch of libraries but I didn't know much beyond that. So on Friday when I was at home I was like hmm, I'm curious about that, so why don't I just Google it? So Carnegie Library. And of course what always comes up first is the Wikipedia page. And it tells me about Andrew Carnegie and a Carnegie library is built with the money by Scottish businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. And there was a total of 2500, two thousand five hundred and nine Carnegie libraries that were built between 1883 and 1929. So I was looking through here. And I was like okay so, some of them were in the United States, the UK, Ireland, and I wanted to find about about more of the libraries that were built in the United States. So I started a new page. Carnegie libraries in the US. And it tells me where they are. But this isn't really the kind of format that I was looking for so then I was like well how many are in California, so switch that to California. Okay, a list of Carnegie libraries in California. And this was an

awesome list to see because it actually has some of the photos of the libraries themselves, and it's alphabetical by the town, so Alameda is really close to me, I was like oh, can I go to that library right now, it was already closed but it tells me it was open in 1903 and it was a public library until 1998 but it's been vacant since, so I couldn't actually even go to that one, some of these are still active libraries, a lot of them are still there, the buildings are still there but they have a new business inside. So I look down to Hayward. And there wasn't a picture. And it said that the library was built in 1903 for the cost of \$11,750, and it was demolished in 1949 and this about broke my heart, so then I was like what did it look like? Now that it's gone I want to know what it looked like. So I put in Carnegie library Hayward. And Hayward, Wisconsin comes up but I'm gonna put Hayward, California. I spelled Carnegie wrong because I was typing too fast, that's fine. So here's a little snippet, this is from the historical society in Hayward, there's a detail with the horse and buggy, and then a larger image. It's open in 1906, this one says this source says that it was \$10,000 to build. And tells me a little bit about the library. And, it closed in 1948 and then it was demolished in 1949, which is so sad. But I want to see more images, so if I try this again and do Carnegie library Hayward CA, but then go to images, then I was able to see more images of the library. And this one's really beautiful, it looks like it was probably a postcard or on a poster or something. So this tells me that it was a postcard. And of course it's a whole page of Alameda county and Hayward in particular, here it is. In all its beautiful, colored glory. The sunset no less, and I was again so heartbroken. And then I actually went to the current Hayward library, Hayward's in the middle of getting a new library, it's gonna be open in a couple of years. And I went in just a few minutes before they closed, it's not a library I frequent that often, and guess what was behind the checkout desk? A massive image of this library. This all happened within the span of a couple of hours from when I was thinking back to the library that I had passed the week prior, and then following all the links on the internet to showing up to the library in person and seeing that big, beautiful photo of a library that's no longer, it was kind of an amazing evolution. I encourage you to go down whatever research rabbit hole you find interesting to you at the moment, whether that be hashtags, looking through actual books, or just clicking around on the internet. It's amazing what you might discover.

Day 22: Make a Map

- When I was younger, I wanted to be a cartographer, because I thought I could draw sea monsters and mermaids, and then when I grew up I was a little disappointed, because it's not exactly what cartographers do. And also, I'm terrible at geography. But, now as an artist, I can draw whatever maps I want, and they're actually a really fun exercise. You can draw a map from memory. It could be of an actual space. But it could also be imagined, or something very abstract. It's whatever your heart's desire is. I thought I'd share with you some maps that I've seen in books, and a couple of maps that I did myself. This is an awesome book for kids. You know I love my kid's books. And, these maps are true geographically, but they have some great information in addition to that. They have a lot of drawings of animals, architecture, activities, like this has hiking and skiing. This is for Iceland. This is fun. This one's of Sweden. So like this beautiful castle, that looks like it's from a Wes Anderson movie. Finland. Greece. This one includes some ancient history, some traditional costumery. Plants in some case, the Judas Tree, and the blossom, and the catsnake. Could do maps of real or imagined places, or maybe historical maps of places that no longer exist. And it's fun to think about kind of what you would draw to illustrate or denote certain characteristics or features within your map. You could have a legend or a key, so that you have no words at all, and you can just include some symbols. I love this one with the big whale, and then the surfing, which is so fun.

And then the Panama hat. It's a good way to communicate information, and to pass it on. This one of Antarctica is really cool, because it's probably a place I won't visit in my lifetime. And I love all the little penguins. There are also maps of places that don't exist in the physical world. This is a book called "You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination," and there are a lot of really cool maps in here. This one's pretty abstract. Probably only the artist knows what that's a map of. This one's really fun. It's an 18th Century historical map of Vishnu's footprints, as constellations of his earthly symbols. And a contemporary artist, Annette Messenger, did a similar thing, where she took feet, and included some of her own personal history on it. I thought this one was really fun, because it's all the different types of common apples that are grown in this area of the UK. So there are all these great drawings of apples and cider, and some other fun apple byproducts. And I thought this one was really pretty. Just a very select color palette, about four colors. Very limited text, and just really beautiful kind of simple drawings and color blocking, to denote the terrain of the countryside. So the map I did, because really I've been wanting to make maps for a long time, like I said, since I was a little kid, and I've never actually sat down and done it. I've maybe done little elements and observations, but thinking about how you would draw a space in real life, or something from memory, maybe you wanna draw a map from one of your favorite books, is kind of interesting because it's hard to draw things to scale. So, I did this, it's not perfectly to scale, but it's kind of close. And, it's a map of my house. It's pretty literal though. So I've got my kitchen and my dining room. These little things that look like tripod octopuses are chairs, they're stools. And I've got a fireplace that you can see from both the dining room and the living room, my chairs, my garage, the front porch, my housemate's bedroom. My bedroom has a little more detail. I spend a lot of time in here. Charlie is on the bed. I actually really liked these hangers for places where I hang things. I hang all my dresses up in my garage instead of putting them in the dryer. I have a new firepit in my backyard. Sometimes I hang things out in the backyard too, I have lines for that. And, I think this is an interesting depiction. It's fun to think about my space in this way. But then I wanted to take it a step further. But this is a map of how my house actually feels to me, as opposed to the actual placement of things. So instead of having any words, other than house of Cerruti, this is my garage. It is a deathtrap of bins full of supplies. It's very well organized, but there are many, many, many bins. And there I am, behind them, trying to organize them for the rest of my life. This is my kind of kitchen dining room area. The colors in that room are a lot of warm tones. I have peeled away the wallpaper, and below it was this really cool 1950s wallpaper, that has these kind of kitchen graphics on it, like olives and little vinegar and oil dishes, and little fishes and all these kinds of things. But overwhelming because it's so old, and it's been hidden for so long, those colors are kind of warm tones. My house is full of books and of art, so there are kind of books everywhere. I have bookshelves in both rooms, on this entire back and side of the house. There's my fireplace, it's kind of in the middle of those two rooms. The colors in my living room are mostly like black and hot pink. When I think about my living room, I think of it like Victorian kind of aesthetic, plus hot pink, if you can imagine that. And the most important thing, art piece in that room, is this piece that I have by Kai Samuels-Davis. It's this really large, really beautiful oil portrait above my couch. And I have this little tiny framed seascape. I live in my grandparents' old house, and this was hanging there when I was a kid, so it's remained there, and so I feel like that's an important part of my house. The front porch is where my mail comes, so there's the postman, postlady, handing me my mail. This is my housemate's room. It's a black hole of I don't even know what. I never look in there, I never go in there, I barely ever see my housemate, but that's her room. It's the unknown. I have a little tiny studio space in one room, that I never, ever use. I mostly just paint at my kitchen

table, because it's closest to the tea. But there it is. There are more books in that room. Tiniest little bathroom, that's Jessie's bathroom. I have the tiniest little bathroom also. And then my bedroom, more books of course. I have a really beautiful antique thread cabinet, which is here. My room is mostly blues. There's like a whole art wall behind my bed, and I kind of recreated it. It used to be very pink, and now it's all blue art. The most important art piece, although I have so much art in my bedroom, is maybe this piece by Sarah Ball. She's a British painter, and I saw her work online. I had never seen it in person, and I corresponded with this gallery in London to buy a piece of hers, and it's a painting of an anonymous immigrant, probably from the late 1800s, and he's wearing a turban. And it's hanging on all this vintage wallpaper that's bright orange, so that's what that represents. My fireplace, and the colors outside are mostly kind of warm colors, because I never water the grass, so, it's kind of brownish. This funny little space is an enclosed patio. Those little spidery looking things are these kind of funny scrolly chairs that were left over from when my grandparents were here. The hose, I just got a new hose. I feel like it's a major character in the backyard. And then I started planting all these things in this one corner of my backyard. I have peas, and squash, and these beautiful Nasturtiums. So, this is what my house feels like, as opposed to actually what it's made up of. The kitchen, the bathroom, the living room. And so, it was fun to put this together, because I hadn't thought about my house in this way. I could redo this map again, and only choose colors. I could decide to map out my house by the art that's hanging, by the types of books. Maybe different rooms have different books, which they do. So, that's a possible way for me to organize my space. I really loved doing this activity. I think it would be fun to think about the places that I've lived. Like when I studied abroad, maybe mapping out that town, or even my apartment, and what is it like compared to my memory. With the advantage of Google Maps, I could actually compare it to what it's actually like, and I think that would be a fun activity too, because I have friends that I met there that I'm still friends with, and I could have them draw their maps of how they remember that space. It's just another way to reframe how you think about your space, how you engage with your space, and maybe include a little bit of imagination along the way.

Day 23: Let Me Read You a Story

- Been thinking about all the things that I love to do that help me feel like I am a more creative person or help me feel more engaged with my everyday life. One of the things I realized that I do all the time is listen to stories. I love being read to. I listen to a ton of audio books. You might listen to podcasts or you might read stories to other people. But it's really, really nice to be read to. I'm gonna read you a couple pages from the Velveteen Rabbit. I just want you to sit back and relax. Grab your tea if you need it. 'What is real?' asked the rabbit one day when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender before nanny come in to tidy up the room. 'Does it mean having things that buzz inside of you and a stick out handle?' 'Real isn't how you're made,' said the skin horse, 'it's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time not just to play with you but really, really loves you, then you become real.' 'Does it hurt?' asked the rabbit. 'Sometimes,' the skin horse says, for he was always very truthful. 'When you're real, you don't mind being hurt.' 'Does it happen all at once like being wound up or bit by bit?' 'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the skin horse, 'you become. It takes a long time, that's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily or have sharp edges or those who have to be so carefully kept.' We have a picture. This is the skin horse telling his story. 'Generally by the time you are real, most of your hair has been loved off and your eyes drop out and you get lose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all because once you are real, you can't be ugly except by people who don't understand

you.' 'I suppose you're real,' asked the rabbit. Then he wished he had not said it for he thought the skin horse might be sensitive. But the skin horse only smiled. 'The boy's uncle made me real,' he said. 'That was a great many years ago. But once you are real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always.' The rabbit sighed. He thought it would be a long time before this magic called real happened to him. He longed to become real, to know what it was like, and yet the idea of growing shabby and losing his eyes and whiskers was rather sad. He wished that he could become it without those uncomfortable things happening to him. I'll leave it up to you to finish the rest of that story. If you haven't had a chance to read the Velveteen Rabbit, I recommend that you do. Or any book, have someone read to you. It's a really, really delightful feeling.

Day 24: Found Word Poem

- When making things, books or drawing or sit down to start a new project, the images is what comes most easily for me, and the writing is always a second. So this is an activity that will help you create poetry, come up with phrases and new words to work with. It's a found-word poem. This is something I teach in all of my altered bookmaking classes or accordion bookmaking classes. It's a really fun activity because you don't have to write words, you don't have to draw from your own vocabulary. You're actually gonna work with found pages. You just tear these out of a book or a magazine. I've got two pages here. You can just do this with one, but because this is a small book, and I'm only gonna be able to use one side of the page, I ripped out two. The idea is to highlight, underline, circle the words that pop out at you, and you're supposed to do this quickly. You're not supposed to belabor. You're not thinking about crafting new sentences and certainly not paragraphs. You're gonna cut all this out and rearrange it. So this is really just about highlighting the words that immediately spark some kind of interest. If you don't want to circle the words, you can also black-out the words that you don't like, it's up to you. (pleasant electronic music) (humming) Alright, I'm gonna cut up the words that I underlined, and we're gonna rearrange them on the page to make a new poem. (inspiring electronic music) There are all my words. I'm definitely not gonna be using all of them, so I'm just gonna rearrange and kind of play with phrases. For me, this would probably go into a book or a sketchbook. It might become a card. It's a really fun way to kind of play with language that isn't your own and create new phrases and poems out of it. Sometimes they're kind of dark, and sometimes they're silly. And sometimes they don't make a lot of sense, and that's fine. Alright, I'm just gonna move things over, so we'll place "shining like," "innocent," "broken limb," "pure woman," "shocks," "evermore," "falls," "evermore," "when I speak," "now lies." "Stars of love smoldered thy manhood, "shining like innocent broken limb. "Pure woman falls evermore when I speak now lies." "Now lies young heart." Hmm. Yeah, that's it. That's the one (laughing). So maybe I'll save some of these other words. I can create new phrases. You can play with it. I like to just kind of react and put it together. I will probably glue this down just so I don't lose all these little, tiny, fragile fragments of paper. But then I could cut it up again, and I can glue it in a new place. "Stars of love," I really like that. That could be a great title for something. "Smoldered thy manhood, shining like innocent broken limb. "Pure woman falls evermore when I speak. "Now lies young heart." Yeah, that's good. I like it. Using my favorite glue stick for this. It's easier to just, like, lick your finger, place it right onto your glue stick. Your fingers are gonna get a little bit gluey. That's fine. You can also use a small brush, and gel medium would work really well for this. (playful music) I feel like "broken limb" should be "limbs" or something. I don't know. It's gonna go there. It's a really fun way to create new content for yourself. Somebody who did this in the most epic scale is this guy, Tom Phillips. He took a Victorian novel called *The Human Document* and did this with every single page. Instead of

cutting out and re-gluing it down, he drew or colored around, and I'll show you in a just a second. The new title for that book is called Humument, and you can see how he created patterns, he painted, he circled, created these little underground-tunnel-looking things. And I think, I don't know for sure, I haven't read it from start to finish, but a kind of new narrative is created through this practice. It's kind of amazing. Uh, there are some flower petals from earlier in my week. "Humument," that's probably how he got the title, maybe on that particular page. "See, see, see the things, the things from the changed sea. "No future, furniture." These are super fun to read. And they don't really make a lot of sense, and that's totally fine. You can just pick out tiny little phrases. I think they're a great way to come up with titles. I find that titling artwork is really hard, and it's really fun sometimes to put abstract concepts with your art and let the viewer bring their own narrative to the piece. Try making a found-word poem. It's a great way to generate new content for yourself.

Day 25: Simplify a Motif

- Today's activity is about observing the world around you like we've been practicing this whole month, but then distilling it, refining it, and maybe abstracting it a little bit. I want you to find something that you've observed in the world and take a picture of it, and then make a pattern out of it. This isn't a perfectly repeating pattern, although you could do that. This is just about distilling it into its most essential shapes and drawing it over and over again, and maybe creating some kind of overall design. I have these pansies that I saw this weekend. I had never seen anything like this. They have all these amazing little lines as part of the petal shape. I could, of course, paint this entire thing with the leaves and all of that. Instead, I'm just gonna look at that shape of the pansy and kind of create a more abstract version, distilling it down even further, and playing with these sort of scribbly lines. I've already started. I'm working on a big piece of Strathmore paper. Let's take a look at that, the shape of that pansy. It has kind of a big petal in the back. Two petals that come out, and then one central petal. I'm just keeping everything very quick. I'm working with some Koi brush markers here. Just coming down. Then, I'm just gonna switch my colors a little, keep it in the yellows with purple on top. Oops. You could look at a different one, if you want. You can see that I already have these ones one drawn. Just to give you a sense of the pattern. You could go around and add kind of an off-register line, if you wanted. I think we need another lighter one here. Now that I know their basic shape, with the big petal in the back, the two on the side and that kind of upside down heart-shaped one on the bottom, I don't necessarily need to look at my reference. This is about observing something and then distilling it, abstracting it, making it more simple. Let's switch up our purple color. This is a kid's marker. It is running out of juice, but that's fine. It's gonna give me a slightly thinner line. You could do this with colored pencil or paint or whatever your favorite medium is. I like to use big, fat markers 'cause it helps keep me even looser. Then, with the brush tip I can get both a thick and a thin line. Then, I'm just gonna keep going and make kind of this falling pattern. Because these don't have a stem, there's not orientation. They can kind of be upside down or right side up. It doesn't really matter. It's fun to play and be inspired by nature. I like just how kind of scribbly these became from the beginning to the end. I know where it started. I know that there are these really beautiful, delicate lines in the actual pansy, but in the making of them, they become really abstract and like their own thing which is really exciting to play with. It's a new way to get inspiration from your world.

Day 26: Look Through a Viewfinder

- When artists are training to draw or paint, they often use a viewfinder which allows them to bring

in their focus and look and isolate a single portion of whatever they're looking at so they can get the perspective correct, the proportion, the composition, that's called a viewfinder, and you can easily make one just by taking a piece of paper and cutting out an opening and the opening could be any shape, I think traditionally it's square. We're gonna freehand this because we're not gonna use it for accurate drawing, we're gonna use it for something else. But normally it would be a perfect square, this is just a square shape. And you get this. I can see the camera through this, but only the camera, which is awesome. The point is, instead of seeing everything at once, this forces you to only see a small portion at a time. So if I were to open a book for example, I could focus in on a single word as opposed to the entire page. Same thing is true for the world around you, and I find that these are really fun to take photographs through, it's a way of framing your subject and just experiencing the world in a different way. That's what this whole month is about, engaging with your daily life in new ways that challenge the way you think and challenge the way that you see. Now for this you need your phone or you need a film camera, but if you don't want to actually take a photo you can just observe your world through this for a few minutes, I see Faith I see Devlin. So I'm gonna open up my phone and we're gonna take a look behind me and we're gonna see what it looks like through the viewfinder. So here's what I see in the real world and through my phone. But if I use my viewfinder, it limits what I can see. Now you are gonna have a challenge holding all of the things and making sure that your phone is focusing on the right thing, but actually I like this soft focus for a lot of things. So let's bring this even closer. There, that would be a really fun photo. What else do I see? Oh. (shutter clicks) And I can play with how close this is, the closer this is to my camera, then the more I get to see, and the further away it is, the less that the viewfinder gets to see. So I could take a picture of that and then I can go back in and crop that on my phone to something like that. But you can see there's a new composition by using the viewfinder instead of seeing everything at once. And of course I want to see what Charlie looks like. Alright, and there's Charlie and he's out of focus. And then I can focus him, play with how close or far away this is. And like I said, I can go back in, oops, and play with how that's framed. You can make your viewfinder any shape that you like, this one is a pink Post-it note with a little heart shape, and you can actually put this on the end of a camera and you get what's called bokeh which is where the lights reflect and refract and they create these big circles. But if you cut a little piece of paper and put it on the end of your lens with a heart, then those will be hearts instead of circles which is really fun. Of course I tried this and I did it with Charlie. So that little Post-it note made a heart for my heart. And then a lot of kids' toys you actually look through, things like kaleidoscopes, those magnifying glasses, are really fun to take photos through. This is a little spy cam, it doesn't actually take any pictures but when you look through it there's a mirror that comes out the side so you're supposed to be able to look and observe the person that is next to you as opposed to what it looks like you're looking at. So it looks like I'm looking at the camera but really I see Devlin. So I can turn this and I actually really like to take photos through this because it gives you a really soft, fun effect also. This one's a little more disorienting because you're going in the opposite direction and you're holding your phone, and you're holding the other thing. And there's Charlie. It's kind of soft focus at the end of this like hallway, but I really love how it looks. And last, for getting a new perspective on your place, this is a medium-format camera, this is a Yashica, and I remember the very first time I looked through one of these, I felt like I was transported into the movie *Amelie*, it was so magical. It's a dual-reflex lens and you look down in the screen and it feels like the back of a digital camera but these cameras are from the 50s. It's so magical to look down onto this glass plate, and you can change the focus. (sighs) It's so incredibly beautiful. You can actually take a photo just by taking your phone and placing it over

that viewfinder and taking a new image. And there is actually an entire range of photography that does this, and it's called through the viewfinder, TTVF, if you check out that hashtag or Google it. If you look for that online you'll see a whole range of really beautiful photos that actually look older than the photos that come out of this camera. The images that you see are really soft and the photos that you actually get if you use this camera are a little bit different, they're sharper and actually really quite good. But the ones that you take on the ground glass is really, really beautiful and lovely. Again, this is just an exercise for you to play with your perspective, see things in new ways. If you don't have a medium-format camera lying in the back of your closet, or you can't borrow one, then try just using a cut piece of paper and seeing how that changes your view.

Day 27: Draw in Repetition

- If we're looking at our world in new ways and trying to observe as much as we can, sometimes that observation can be honed onto a single object and I'm gonna encourage you to draw or photograph the same object over and over and over and over again and trying to challenge yourself to see that one object in new ways, new perspectives. My object is a little panda. This is Taryn's in our office, sits on her desk and I'm gonna start by drawing it with a blind contour. Let's do it with a China marker. (gentle music) I'm kind of looking down at him and I can see some of his seams. His little foot. (laughs) It's a little panda. And then maybe this time, I mean I could just switch what I'm using to draw him with and continue to do blind contours. Instead I'm just gonna focus on the black parts. So I'm looking at my paper. But I'm still keeping it really loose, just getting the shapes. And I didn't actually... Want to do a panda necessarily, I was just hunting around the office for something to try this exercise with and Taryn happened to have a panda. I thought it would be good to have some kind of toy or something three-dimensional and soft that I could kind of play with all of its different angles, but a panda actually works really nicely because it's just black and white. Doing these dark shapes is not something I would normally do in my work, but it's a really fun exercise and out of all the ways I've drawn him I think I like this way the best and that's something I learned about myself, I discovered. He's kind of a hunchy panda. I don't know if pandas are like that, but I feel like he's a little like that. So that's really fun. You could do this with watercolor. Let's try one more. I'll do another blind contour, but this time I'll just use this really fine ballpoint pen and maybe we'll do him a little bit smaller. I'm starting the same way. I don't know why, but I always start with like the upper left. I guess because we read left to right, but even when I'm doing people I often do start with their left side or their left eye. Mr. Sketch marker smells like licorice. (laughs) There's a little panda. He's funny, he's not that similar from this one. It's pretty funny like the things that I decide to continuously draw, the seams, obviously his little face. I always miss this little section here on the right side. It's funny how similar they are. I'll show you... All the ways. So in this case, I turned him upside down and drew him like that. He had a little heart tag, so all of these have that heart tag. This was with watercolor. Here's the one where I just did the black parts, a blind contour, this one was also with watercolor just focusing on the black parts mostly, another blind contour but turned to the side using the Mr. Sketch marker, ballpoint pen and drawing him with looking kind of more like a regular sketch, another blind contour, and then this was just turned to the side using the watercolor. He looks a little bit like Mickey Mouse here and the Mr. Sketch marker. You could use anything. This could be flowers turned in different directions. Pick something that's not symmetrical. Don't do this with a ball. That's not gonna help you. But think about things that can be easily turned and moved. You could play with lighting if your object isn't as interesting and change the way that light moves around and make sure you draw your shadows. That could be really interesting. This is

another way to kind of hone your observational skills and play with things that are easily accessible to you. You don't have to go out and search out all of these things. You can just pick something off your desk and try this exercise.

Day 28: Teach Someone Something

- Something that really changes your perspective in the common things that you do and make daily is teaching that thing to somebody else. So Leanna's here. - Hi. - You might recognize Leanna. I'm gonna teach her how to make a fortune teller or cootie catcher as it was called when I was in elementary school. - And you know what? I haven't made one of these since elementary school, so I have no idea. - What we're doing? - What we're doing. - [Courtney] We have some regular typing paper, copy paper in front of us. You do need to have a square. You can make this in any size, but you need to start with a square piece of paper. So, instead of cutting this in advance, I was just gonna show you how you could tear it into a square. - How do you turn this into a square without measuring? - [Courtney] I'll show you. - [Leanna] Okay. - [Courtney] So, take one corner. And fold it up until it matches. So, you're looking at this point down here to make sure that is perfectly aligned. - [Leanna] Okay. - [Courtney] As best you can. - [Leanna] I made it complicated by going an opposite way from you. - [Courtney] No, it's fine. - [Leanna] Am I creasing? - [Courtney] Yup, you're creasing 'cause we're gonna make it hold later anyway. - [Leanna] Good, 'cause I creased. (laughs) - [Courtney] Way to listen to the instructions. It's a good thing when you're a teacher to realize (chuckles) that your students may not listen to you. - [Leanna] I'm a bad student. - [Courtney] No, you're fine. So, we're actually gonna crease along where this edge meets here, and we're gonna tear that away, so that needs to be really nice and creased. I usually just flip it over. - [Leanna] Like this? - [Courtney] Yep. - [Leanna] It's almost like we're making a paper boat. - [Courtney] Kind of, but we're gonna tear this part away. - [Leanna] Can we learn how to make one of those next? - [Courtney] You can teach me that. That'll be your task. (Leanna giggling) 'Cause I don't know how to make a paper boat. I can make a paper airplane. - Or like one of those hats. - Like a hat, yeah. So this is actually, you may wanna open this and fold a back end on itself so that you have a really crisp fold there, and we're gonna tear that away so we're left with a square piece of paper. - [Leanna] OK, I'm usin' my thumbnails to really crease it. - [Courtney] Yes, use your bone folder or your thumbnails and then place your hand on the paper and just tear along this edge. This is great, because teaching someone something makes you think about the language you're using, how you would describe the actions that you're doing with your hands. I have the advantage of Leanna being right next to me, but if you don't have a friend that you can teach something to in this moment, try writing out instructions or, even harder, just drawing pictures. It's really tricky. - And you know what? Maybe you'll learn something about yourself. - I think you will. And your process. (laughs) Alright, so that's our first, good, yours looks like mine, OK. Now we're gonna take one edge and fold it up to the other edge to make a big X. Try to line up everything as best you can. Lookin' good. It's pretty close. - [Leanna] Pretty good, pretty close. Yup, that's perfect as yours. - [Courtney] No, no, it's good, it's good. Now we're gonna take each one of these four points and fold it into the center. Like this. - OK, crease it? - Good, yup, crease it. All the way around. - [Leanna] This is like those notes that, you know, you'd fold up, you know what I'm talking about. - [Courtney] Yeah. All those notes that you passed when you're in the 6th and the 7th and the 8th grade. - [Leanna] So many middle school flashbacks right now. - [Courtney] I know, it's so true. I used to do so many of those notes. There were so many different folding techniques. That was before Gelly Roll pens were around, right? Like, just a few years before? God, our notes would've been so cool if we had Gelly Roll pens. - We just

had stupid Bic pens. - Yeah. - [Courtney] Those were pretty classy. - [Leanna] You had to make due. - [Courtney] Now how do you look? - [Leanna] I look good. - [Host] Perfect. It's nice to check in with the person that you're teaching and make sure that there's is looking like yours before you move on ahead without them. - [Leanna] Wildly off the rails. - [Courtney] No, it looks good. Now we're gonna flip it over. And we're gonna fold again, each corner to the center. (relaxing music) - [Leanna] Does it matter if you go in a circle like this? - [Courtney] No, it doesn't matter, you could do opposites. - [Leanna] I could go opposites? - [Courtney] Yeah. - [Leanna] I know for next time. - [Courtney] Lookin' good. This paper's a little bit thicker, so making your creases nice helps. - [Leanna] And could I use this, like pretty, patterned paper to do this? - You could, but-- - Or does that ruin the whole thing? - We're gonna write on it and/or paint on it. So I like to have just a blank piece of paper. - [Leanna] OK. Alright. - [Courtney] Alright, that looks good. Alright, now, I think the best way to get it into formation is to just fold it in half. So force everything down and fold it in half like this. Yeah, that's good. Alright and you're gonna stick your pointer firnger and you thumb underneath. - [Leanna] Like here? - [Courtney] So just on one side. See how I'm gripping it like that? - [Leanna] Yeah. - [Courtney] So like little tents. - [Leanna] OK, on either side. - [Courtney] Yeah, and you're gonna do it on this side as well. And you have to force the paper to remember the folds you've made. So we're gonna force it like that. - [Leanna] So did I do mine right? - [Courtney] Yeah, that looks good. - [Leanna] Something feels wrong. - [Courtney] No, that looks good, now push these together. And these will pop out. - [Leanna] God you really do need to have somebody show you how to do this. - [Courtney] Try drawing it, it's really hard. (laughs) So this is, these are the mechanics of how this looks. (Leanna gasps) - Whoa. - And you can, you know, play with your folds and reinforce anything that you need to. Good. - I did it! - So now that you have all your folds in place and you remember how to pop it up from the stage where it's flat to this three-dimensional stage, you can go back in and add colors and text and create little fortunes. So I have one that I've finished. So we're gonna play this game. - OK. - And just so you guys can see too, these are your outmost words or colors, they could be pictures, you could draw little maps, you could take anything from this month so far and apply it to the outside of this. - [Leanna] So we have ruby, indigo, ocher, yellow. - [Courtney] I know, it's hard for people who are learning. And then we have colors on the inside and then little fortunes. So we're gonna play. - Yes! - Alright, so this is actually how you play this game. So pick a color. - Ruby. - R-u-b-y. - [Leanna] And then I pick one of these? Teal. - T-e-a-l. - Now I pick another one? - Yup. - [Leanna] Desert. - [Courtney] Great. You thrive in hot climates. - Oh, I do! - Great, you wanna do one more? Or you try it, actually, with me - OK. (laughs) - So you get a feel for it. I'm gonna go for indigo. - [Leanna] I-n-d-i-g-o. - [Courtney] Rose. - [Leanna] R-o-s-e. - [Courtney] Alrighty. Let's go for tomato. - Oh, but you wrote these, you know what they are. - I don't remember any of 'em though. (laughs) - You need extra? - Comfort. - Comfort today. - Nobody can read my handwriting. - Ah, Courtney. - I think that really means chocolate. I think that's what that translates to. - Alright, you wanna go get some chocolate? - Yeah, we should definitely get some chocolate. - OK. - Try teaching something to somebody. It could be how to make a cootie catcher, it could be tying your shoe, could be making some kind of delicious dish. You could show us how to make Kombucha. - There you go. - And I think the process of teaching something to somebody really changes your perspective, makes you a better listener, it makes you, I think, a little more conscience of you words and the language that you're using and how you would describe the things that are natural to you. And it's just about changing your perspective a little bit. - And it's more fun. - It's way more fun.

Day 29: Draw With Your Non-Dominant Hand

- Sometimes it's good to be really uncomfortable, and probably it's a good growing experience and learning experience, and one of the things that makes me the most uncomfortable is having to draw with my left hand. It's terrible. But that's what we're gonna do. We're gonna draw with our non-dominant hand. This is similar to blind contour. I feel like you get kind of similar results. It's really hard and feels so alien and foreign to me, and it might feel the same way to you. I'm gonna use something big, and I'm gonna work on big paper, so I'm just using a Mr. Sketch marker. You could do this with a stick. You could try drawing with a stick, a big paintbrush, and I'm gonna draw my trusty steed here, Charlie. Now I can look at my paper because it's not really gonna help me, because it's really hard to draw this way. Uh, you moved! (playful, timer-like music) Charles! We're gonna have to change our subject. Alright, you ready? We just have to start over. You settled? He's looking down, which is always a little bit harder for me to draw. His little nose. His ear. We're just not gonna pay attention to that line, that's fine. His hair goes up like that. Uh, feels so hard. It makes my stomach hurt a little bit, drawing like this. Not even how it looks, it's not even how it looks, just how it feels. Here's his paw. So this is his tail coming up, and his other little feet. He's very fluffy, so... He does have this great scruff on his back. Yeah, that's Charlie. He looks a little bit like a lion. Okay, and I'm also gonna write his name lefthanded. Aww, Charlie. That's really hard, and it feels so strange and so foreign, but it's a really fun exercise, just like the blind contour, which is such my second nature at this point. The lefthanded, or nondominant, drawing is tricky to do. It definitely kind of makes you think about the marks that you're making. Maybe you want to be more efficient so you don't have to do as many. In some cases, I felt like I was falling into my blind contour continuous line, and in some cases I picked up my pen. So whatever feels the most comfortable in this very uncomfortable situation, you should do. I have some glass vessels that I drew earlier, and they were really fun. They look like candy dishes. Charlie's over it. And again, I wrote out "vessels." You don't even have to draw. You could just try writing your name, you could try writing the alphabet lefthanded. I think probably the more you do it, the better you get, but it still is so interesting to just switch hands and see what comes out when you use your nondominant hand.

Day 30: Create a Ritual

- We're at the last day of the month. The last day of learning how to look at our space and our lives in a new way and maybe observe a little bit more, listen a little bit more both to ourselves and to our surroundings. I wanted to share with you some of the things that I have kind of put into a ritual for myself. Things that I really enjoy that kind of set my mood and my space. When I get home, I always light a candle. I really like the light that this gives off. I love the scent and it creates some warmth. I often have a cup of tea. That's another way to kind of reset myself at the end of the day. Whatever resonates with you from this month, I hope that you will put it into practice and continue doing it. It's about setting up that routine for yourself. Giving yourself the time and space to be creative and finding those moments that are not perfect where we don't have a lot of time to still be creative and that tiny little sliver that you gleaned for yourself. Check out the pdf because I'm gonna put some resources for you: what I'm reading, the books that we talked about when I showed you stuff from the library and some of my favorite resources for map making, etc. I'm also gonna put a playlist in there. I listen to music a lot in addition to audio books. It's another way to kind of reframe, reset, and kind of change your space so that it really reflects the creativity that you want to incorporate in your daily life. And last I wanna say that there are no more excuses. Start doing that thing today because tomorrow if you put it off it becomes the next week and the next month and

then a year has passed and you haven't embarked on that really scary and exciting journey to bring creativity into your daily life. You can do it. I know you can do it. I hope that you share it with your community and that you find a new practice that is fulfilling and creative for you. (upbeat music)