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## **Intuitive Mark Making** with Flora Bowley

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### **Chapter 1 - Intuitive Mark Making**

#### Intuitive Mark Making

- Hi, everybody, I'm Flora Bowley. I'm a painter, writer, workshop facilitator, and we're here in my Portland, Oregon studio. And I'm excited to share a little bit about my Brave Intuitive Painting process. (upbeat music) One thing that I believe in with this process is that there are no rules. There's no way of making mistakes. In fact, the more we reach into areas of the unknown and the unexpected, the more interesting our paintings become. One of the ways that I love to do that is by using tools that are not your typical paintbrushes that you buy at the art supply store. I love to always find new ways of making marks, new ways of moving paint around and discovering things along the way. For this particular demonstration, I've gathered together some really fun organic material. And you can do this with veggies or fruits or whatever that might be expiring in your fridge or using parts of the veggies that maybe you don't typically eat, like the end of the celery. And I've also gathered some things like flower. This is a little pine needles I found on my walk. I've got a little branch here. So really getting creative with your creative tools is a great way to approach painting in a really unique kind of way. What I've got here is the variety of materials I'm gonna work with to make the marks. I've got some heavy card stock, really just basic. You could even use typing paper. I've got a little knife to do some cutting of the things. I've got a palette, which for me is a little cookie sheet with a piece of glass and a white piece of paper underneath. You can also use palette paper or even a piece of cardboard, whatever is easy. And I've also got a few different colors of paint. These can be craft paints or any kind of acrylic paint. So we're gonna dive in here and do some explorations and see what kinda interesting marks our organic materials will make on our paper. I'm gonna grab some GOLDEN Fluid paint to add to my palette. This is certainly not the kind of paint you have to use. This is a little higher end paint. You can use craft paint. But one thing I recommend is to use a paint that is more fluid, meaning it's going to flow off of whatever object you're using to make the mark with. If you're using heavier body paint that's more the consistency of butter, you'll probably face some globby, not so easy to work with paint. So I recommend using a fluid paint or adding water or acrylic glazing medium to a heavier paint, mixing that up to a nice consistency where it's going to be super easy to flow right off your untraditional paintbrushes. I'm gonna start here with this flower. And I'm just going to sort of dab some paint onto it. I can tell already this is gonna be cool. This is something new for me. I've never actually painted with a flower like this. But trying to get a nice amount of paint on there. And then just pressing it right onto the paper. Really cool. So this is a great way to make a repetitive design if you wanted to make a pattern on a painting or add a different kind of texture. Lots of possibilities. That was a great example of just stamping, but you can also move the paint around with the tool in a variety of ways. So you might choose to actually use it more like a brush. And we're using these little card stock papers just as a place to experiment. I find that they're really unprecious. Instead of experimenting right on a painting that we might be working on, working on paper like this, this card stock, is really forgiving. It's really unprecious. So it's a great way to explore and experiment that's not on the painting you might be working on. It's a great way to gather ideas and then things that feel really exciting you might choose to later explore in your actual painting. Okay, so I'm gonna move on to this little branch. It's got some interesting little buds on it, so I'm just going to again add the paint. You could also brush the paint on if that is easier. And this is, again, a first-time tool for

me, so we'll see what happens. So I'm gonna start by just pressing it, whoop. (laughs) It's exploding as we go. Okay, (laughs) you know what? This is actually not really working. What happens when we're experimenting is that we figure it out as we go along. So what I'm gonna do is actually, I'm feeling inspired to take these little parts of it off and try again with just the stick itself, and we'll see. We'll see, we'll see, we'll see. So I'm gonna call this a failed experiment. (laughs) And what I actually might use this for is doing more etching into the paint, meaning if I was using thicker paint, I could come in and do some really cool texture. Learning as we go is how we do it. So we'll set these aside, and I'm gonna move on to some things that I'm a little more familiar with. This is, as you can see, a potato. And if you have rotting potatoes, they actually can make really great stamping tools, so now you have a whole 'nother way to upcycle your food that might otherwise end up in the compost. As you can see, I'm going to take this little knife and make some designs. So we'll start with just a simple triangle. Obviously you can carve up any shape you want, which is really fun, 'cause potatoes are really easy to cut. And then I'm dipping it in the paint. And stamping an awesome little triangle right onto my paper. I actually love how there's a little rotting little blemish in there, because it's creating this little mark that makes, to me, the shape even that much more interesting. So veggies are really cool in their imperfections. I also love how when I first started and I had lots of paint on the potato, it made a really clean impression, whereas the paint started to disappear and cause all kinds of variation, which I find to be really beautiful. Okay, we'll do one other shape. I'm actually just gonna use a piece of the potato that was left over from the triangle experiment. And it's a really cool little half-circle, which is lovely. So I didn't even intend to make this one, but it ended up being a nice sort of leftover piece, and that's a great shape as well. Right, moving on, I'm gonna grab a, this is just a basic mushroom, and I'm gonna tear that part out. We have lots of options here. So I'm gonna add a little more paint. I'm gonna add another color into the mix, so a little magenta next to the turquoise. I'm going to dip the mushroom into both colors a little bit and see what happens. Love that. Totally love that. That is a great mark. I would love to use that in a painting, so making a mental note here, and I could also make a little note with writing if I thought that I might forget what made that mark. I could just make little notes to myself for later. And I'm curious to see what happens if I actually cut this mushroom in half and play around with this cross-section. Another interesting shape. And you could also work with things like dragging it, which actually makes a really neat, beautiful mark as well. And just for fun, we've got the little stalk of the mushroom. Might as well see what that does. Don't wanna waste anything here. Oh, it made a little heart. (laughs) I didn't, oh, it's like a heart inside of a heart. That's amazing. Totally cool. And, again, as the paint leaves the tool, it totally changes what's happening on the paper, so always good to sorta push the limits of each kind of mark-making device. And here we've got another mushroom. I just wanna do a quick stamp of this, because it's so big and cool. This is a portobello. Gonna add a little bit more paint and really sop it up. (laughs) And here we go. (laughs) Debris. Ooh, so that inner part, I'm realizing, is actually really cool, so I'm gonna make sure I get some paint on there and really press it down. Ta-da! Really cool. You could do a whole painting just with mushrooms. Okay, moving onto another cool veggie option is our corn cob. This is a little bit of an interesting one, which I'm actually happy about, 'cause it'll probably make for some really cool marks on the paper. So I'm just gonna roll it (laughs) and see what happens. Love it. So such a fast way to make marks and such a unique kind of impression that they leave. I'm curious to see what happens when I drag it. Need a little more paint there. Also really nice. You'll never look at veggies the same way after this, hopefully. (laughs) We'll switch on over here to a pepper. This is a pepper that has seen better days, and so it's a great pepper for painting with. We'll check out this shape. Love that. Really cool, and this is a

shape that I most likely wouldn't naturally do with my brush, so using these different kinds of tools can really open up a whole different kind of mark-making experience. And one more veggie. This is one of my favorites. So this is a whole bunch of celery, and there's a lot you can do with celery. So first I'm gonna cut off the bottom. And this is a great, as you can see, lots of, it almost looks like a flower. We don't eat this part anyway, so it's an awesome thing to use in your painting. So I'm gonna load up some paint there. Ooh! And you kinda get the hang of it as you go. For some things you might need to press down a little bit more. That's really lovely. Obviously if you cut it not as low, it's just every celery's different, so lots of variation there. And then the celery stalks are another great shape. So let's grab a fresh sheet of paper here and see what happens. Nice. I like that, but I think what I would like even more is a little bit smaller. Yeah, that's great. And then if you wanted to make a pattern, you can always organize your stamping marks in a way that actually creates a whole 'nother kind of mark. So just ordering them in a more conscious way can be really fun. So the world of mark-making with untraditional tools is really endless, so I hope that you can start to see things in your life that maybe were garbage or things that you wouldn't think of to paint with in a whole new way and build up an archive of inspiration that you can eventually use in your painting process.