
How to Make a Blank Art Journal with Dawn DeVries Sokol

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

(peppy music) - Hi, I'm Dawn DeVries Sokol. I'm an art journaler, author of Art Doodle Love and other doodling books. I'll show you two different kinds of journals that I like to make, one out of cereal boxes and the other out of old hard cover books. We'll add different kinds of papers, and I'll show you some really easy binding that you can do for both. In the end, you're gonna have two easy journals that you can totally trash, paint, and doodle over to make your own. (peppy music)

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- For these journals you'll need some upcycled materials that you have even laying around the house. Very easy stuff. You're gonna need a hard cover book. I usually just get the ones from the dollar store. You're gonna also need some cereal boxes, and they can be any size really. It doesn't matter. I like to use a paper cutter, or you can also use a cutting mat with an exacto knife and a straight edge. It's up to you. You'll need a bone folder, some kind of awl to punch the holes, binder clips, which will keep all the papers and the covers together while you're punching the holes and sewing the book together. You'll need some duct tape, some artist masking tape, various papers for the pages of the books, and these can be basically magazine pages. We've got some construction paper here, and just recycled catalog pages, old ledger paper, things that will work for you inside the book. Pair of scissors, some waxed linen thread, and really, you can even use dental floss or a heavy duty kind of yarn. You're only going to need a couple yards, so it really doesn't matter what you use for it. A binder's needle, a large flat button, and some sandpaper. Once you gather your materials, these books will come together for you really quickly.

Chapter 3 - Make Journals

Make a cereal box journal

- The first journal we're gonna put together is a really simple one made of cereal boxes, pasta boxes, whatever you have laying around the house. I'm gonna show you how I cut a box apart using a paper cutter. But you can use an X-acto knife, a straight edge, and a cutting mat if you don't have a paper cutter. First we're gonna find the fold, the actual seam within the box. And it's usually, you're gonna be able to see it inside. It's where they glued the package together to create the box itself. So you're just gonna rip down that seam. And pull that apart. Then you're gonna fold it back over so that your flaps align, and at the top you're going to cut off those flaps. Push those aside. And then you're gonna go to the bottom and cut those flaps. And push those aside. It doesn't have to be perfectly cut. Don't worry about that. With this box, we're gonna end up cutting off a flap so you're gonna want to get rid of this side here. You're not gonna be able to cut this fold off, but don't worry about it. We'll be painting over it and taping over it later to reinforce it. So I'm just gonna go ahead... And cut that last piece off. Because we're cutting through two layers of box, you may have a difficult time getting through it with your paper cutter or your X-acto knife. Don't worry about that. Just tear those last little bits off. So what we're left with is one signature of pages and basically we have the fold here. This fold is what we're gonna use within our binding. But don't worry about this fold. Go ahead and cut up all your boxes. Don't worry about them being all the same size. You're basically

gonna use your largest size box as your cover. And then use the smaller pieces inside. They don't all have to be the same size. Actually, having them different sizes creates more visual interest within the journal. To prepare this for binding, I'm gonna clip the pieces together. Open everything to the center. Make sure that your center folds are all lined up when you do this. You're gonna place the clips around the edges. Some of the boxes may not gather underneath the clips. So that's why you're gonna put as many clips on there as you possibly can. 'Cause you don't want them to slide apart. You might have to adjust this along the way, as you're clipping. And you're gonna want to fold it up, too, after you're done to make sure that everything's lining up properly, which it is. This is not a perfectionist binding, so no worries on measuring or anything like that. I just kind of go up about an inch from the bottom and I eyeball all of this. An inch in from the top. And then I keep doing that. An inch up again from the bottom. An inch down from that last hole at the top. One more here. And one more there. So you have six holes total down the spine. Once we have that done, grab your awl and start with the bottom hole. Or you can start at the top too. It doesn't matter. Be very careful about when you punch through the spine. You don't want to poke yourself. And make sure to check on the other side that you're getting right through the spine and not off spine. Gonna make sure that every hole is punched right into the spine. And if you have to keep flattening it out to line it back up, that's fine too. Then I'm gonna go up to the next hole, turn it over, and make sure that your awl is coming through the fold. Once again, the next hole. And you're just gonna do that all the way up the fold. Sometimes this can get a little unwieldy. Which is why we have the binders clips on the pages. To keep this kind of all together. It can still be a little crazy to handle. So you just gotta be careful. Gonna punch the second to last hole. And then the last hole. Now all of your holes are punched and you're gonna take some of your thread. Like I said, if you don't have waxed linen thread, you can use some kind of heavy duty yarn or dental floss as your binding. You're just gonna take off a couple feet, and what I do is stretch it along my arm. You're gonna do this twice. So two arm lengths. Using your scissors, you're gonna cut off that piece. Pick up your binding needle. And this can sometimes be a little tricky, to thread this through. But what I usually do, is I really try to use my fingernail to flatten out the end of your linen thread, and it just goes right through that way. Just leave a little tail. Not too much. And then I like to add a knot at the end. And maybe even a double knot. The holes that you've punched are gonna be pretty big. They're not gonna be small, so you want to make sure that you have some knots in there to kind of stop that. Starting at the top, I'm gonna go from the outside in. And I'm just gonna punch my needle through. I'm gonna pull that through and leave a tail, probably about three or four inches, on the outside. And then I'm gonna go back out through the next hole. Now sometimes your pages might shift, so you just kind of fold it over a little bit and it'll help you work the needle through to the outside. You're gonna go to your third hole. You're gonna go back inside. And you're just gonna go all the way down the fold. In and out. You want to make sure that you pull your thread taught because then it will really keep your pages in place. And then I'm gonna go through the last hole. I could knot right here and just be done with it, but I'd like to reinforce this. So I'm gonna put the needle and thread back up through the holes once more. This will fill in those little gaps between the thread on each side. And, oops! Got a little tangled on the clips. Be careful of that. And you're still making sure that you're pulling taught. That's very important. Back out. Back in. You're gonna skip the second to last hole and go to the very top because we're gonna want to tie this on the outside of the book. Which, you know that everything is taught on both the inside and the outside. I'm going to take the needle off. Cut these both down to the same size. And then we're gonna make a nice knot with both of them together. You can do your knot however is comfortable for you. There

are several methods, but... Just kind of do a couple knots, just to make sure that it's on there. Just cut as close as you can. Just leave a little bit. Just like that. 'Cause we're gonna tape over that. And then take off your clips. Fold over your book. You can still see the thread and the holes. What I want to do is use a little bit of duct tape to reinforce the spine so we don't have any issues with it falling apart later. Gonna use some duct tape. You can peel off a piece, about the length of the book itself. (tape ripping) I'm just gonna tear it. This is by no means perfect. And I'm just gonna place it over the spine. Smooth it down. If you have any little extra, you can just fold it over... To the inside. So as you can see, we still have that bend in the cover. That's okay. We're just gonna paint over it and maybe even add some tape later. No worries. You want to sand off a little bit of that glossy layer just to give it some grit, so that your gesso or your paint will stick to it once you start that process. (scraping) Now flip over the back cover and do that. (scraping) Then I'm also going to do each page inside. (scraping) Just really have to go over it once or twice with the sandpaper. You can even do this process before you bind the pages together. Which might make it a little bit easier. (scraping) Once you sand all your pages, they're ready for paint or gesso or whatever you want to throw on them. I also want to show you how to add in smaller boxes if you have them. You can easily tape them inside. Using your artist's masking tape. Tape your piece right into the fold. Make sure that your tape doesn't extend beyond the length of that piece that you're taping in. So you can tear off those excess pieces. And then you're gonna want to fold it over, flip it over, and tape it on the other side. You're gonna do that in just the same way that you did the first taping. Taping in extra signatures is an easy way to add in little pieces and bits of things. These journals are a real blank canvas for you to add paint and your own art to. Here are some pages that I've already painted but haven't bound in yet. Each of these pages have been sanded, and I've used some gesso and some acrylics over them. And kinda scratched into some of the paint here and there as well. Also collaged on some photos and little bits of ephemera. I've dropped some ink here and there. Once you add paint, you can't even tell that they were cereal boxes. And now they're ready to be bound into a journal.

Make a hard cover journal

- For this journal, we're gonna use an old hardcover book and give it new life. And of course, we're going to use the same kind of binding method as we did before. But we're gonna do a slight variation. You're gonna wanna remove the dust jacket. And you're gonna cut out the innards of the book. Using an X-acto knife, very carefully cut between the group of pages and the cover itself. Most books will separate out pretty easily. But you might have to do a little extra cutting just to pull them apart. So you do one side, flip it over, and do the other. Now, don't press too hard because you'll cut right through the spine, and you don't want that. Now you're gonna pull the group of pages away from the spine. If it resists, just keep pulling at it. It will eventually come apart for you. There we go. Set the innards aside, and you can use that for collage later. Next we wanna take our duct tape and reinforce the spine. You want to rip your piece about the length of the book, plus a couple of inches. You're gonna place your duct tape, sticky side up, and then you're gonna place your book right on top of that so you that have about an inch on both the top and the bottom to fold it over into the book. It doesn't matter how this looks. You're just gonna wanna get that tape on there to reinforce it. And you can do a couple more pieces of tape on each side of that. This way you're getting along those little crevices too, and reinforcing those as well. So you're gonna wanna do about three piece of tape. Depending on the width of your book, though. Some books are wider than others. I'm just gonna place that on the other side, flip it over. And then I'm gonna use one

more piece of tape for the inside of the spine. And this one doesn't have to be as long as the book. A little bit shorter, so it just sits inside. If it does wrap over, that's fine. I've got a little bit of an extra tail there, but that's all right. I'm just gonna tuck that over. Now we're ready to bind in our pages. We've got several different kinds of paper here. And they're all different lengths and variations. That's okay. Some books are gonna be wider than others. Don't worry too much about that right now. I'm just gonna gather as many pages as I can. I've already folded a lot of these papers in half. And I'm nestling them into each other to make two signatures of pages. Depending on the width of the book, I'd say maybe five to eight pieces for each group of pages. It just depends. You can always nestle them inside the book before you bind them, just to kinda see how it feels. I think I'm gonna use one more of this heavier construction paper. And as you can see, they're a little big large for this book. So I'm going to want to cut them down just a little bit. So I'm going to go to my paper cutter. And I'm just eyeing this. I'm not measuring, I'm not trying to be really accurate. Cutting through the whole stack at the same time. I just wanna make sure that I cut off about an inch, to make sure that this stack is gonna fit within the book. I'm gonna actually take it to my cover and even check. Now it fits lengthwise. But widthwise it's still a little bit big. So I'm gonna take off probably about another inch on that side too. Don't do this with your fold side. Do this on the edges. So then, I'm gonna take the other set of pages. And I'm just gonna line them up with the set of pages that I've already cut, and place those down on the paper cutter. And cut those. And I'm gonna do the same with the length. And now they'll fit really well into your book. Now we don't seem to have as many papers as we should. The spine is a bit wide. So that's okay, because it will allow us to add in a lot of chunky items onto these pages. But you can always add more signatures later, or reduce the width of the spine by cutting down the middle and taping it back together. In this case, I'm going to cut down the length of the spine so that we bring the width down and make it a bit smaller. I'm going to use my cutting mat, an X-Acto knife, and a ruler as a straightedge. And I'm just going to line that up. Just cutting down the center. And you definitely want to do this with a straightedge and a cutting mat and X-Acto knife. This will not work on your paper cutter. There we go. Now what we do is overlap these so that the spine will actually get skinnier, like so. Don't worry about that overlap because you're just going to tape over it anyway. And we're gonna go the length of the book plus a couple of inches. And we're just gonna lay that down the middle of it, on the inside. Flip it over. Then, we're gonna do the same on the outside. We're just gonna line it up with the tape we had already placed down. Don't worry if it's not perfect. This is far from perfect. We just want it to be a fun journal that we can play around in. Just smooth that tape down. And it's gonna be a little bit more to fold it over. Don't worry. Just keep pressing down your tape. And bring in your pages. That will definitely be a lot better for the amount of pages you have, and the width of the spine. Gonna mark the placement of our holes on the inside of the book as we did with the last one. But this time, I'm gonna use a gel pen, a white gel pen, to mark on the duct tape. That makes it a lot easier. And we're gonna do two rows of holes instead of one. So I'm gonna start up about an inch from the bottom, and mark the first hole. Now make sure that you're marking within your spine. Your new spine. And you're gonna go down from the top, about an inch. And same back up from the bottom. Down from the top. Up from the bottom. And down from the top. And then, the great thing about doing two rows is that you can just mark your holes for your second row right next to the holes of your first row. Now we're gonna go ahead and push our awl through the duct tape. This is gonna take a little more muscle on your part, so just be prepared. It may be a little bit of a struggle. We're gonna punch through each of these dots using our heavy-duty awl. The great thing about duct tape, is it's very forgiving. So even if you punch through, and make a really large hole, it

kinda closes itself up. So it won't be too much of a problem once you start sewing, either. Just gonna punch all those holes. Careful not to stab your hands, or your fingers. Cause this can be a little unwieldy at times. You gotta be really careful. Now turn it around and do the same thing on the other side. Just flip over and make sure our holes are actually going through. Now we have all our holes punched. We're gonna go ahead and mark these pages by lining up both groups of pages, both signatures, along the holes that we've already punched. I'm gonna take a pencil, and I'm gonna carefully kind of eye it. This doesn't have to be exact. But you're just going along and marking on the very edges of these pages. You're marking on the fold, which might be a little difficult. But don't worry too much about how perfect it is, and all that. Just wanna make sure that we have some marks on both of these folds so that we can punch the holes. Now, we want to punch holes in both of these. And since these pages are a little... They're an assortment of sizes, I'm gonna use my binder clips to group my pages together. You don't need many on these though. They're pretty thin, and... And then, I'm gonna take my thinner awl, cause you don't need the heavy duty on this one, and I'm just gonna pierce through each mark very carefully. You don't want to rip these pages. A little bit more fragile than working with that hardcover book. So you wanna be really careful about how you handle these. But just make sure that you get through that fold. And I'm gonna turn it around. Now when you do this, before you bind these pages in, you're gonna wanna line them up to your holes again in the spine of the cover to make sure that everything lines up correctly. Because your holes aren't gonna be exact. And if you put it in wrong, your holes aren't gonna line up. Just like that. All of your holes are punched. So we're gonna take our binder clips off, holding onto all of the pages, fold them over. And line them up just to make sure, and they're fine. SO I'm gonna clip these down, just so that they don't venture off on me. Now I'm gonna do the same thing to the other signature. Once the pages are lined up, I'm gonna clip the other group of pages into the cover, just to make sure they stay where they should. I want to use some wax linen thread, and again you can use really any heavy-duty yarn or string that will work. And I'm just gonna go an arm's length. I'm gonna do it one more time. Gonna cut that. And then I'm gonna find my needle, and again I'm just gonna flatten out the end of the thread with my nail, my fingernail. Push that through. Just leave a little tail, you don't need much. So I'm gonna take the first clip off, gonna make sure we got the front cover as the front. So I'm gonna start with this group of pages. The top of the book, I'm gonna go from the outside in. And you're most likely gonna have to do this as pushing the needle through the cover first, and then pushing it through the pages. You're not gonna be able to do it all at once. It gets a little crazy to hold onto all these pages. And you might even have to go hole by hole with your needle. And your needle might get bit sticky from the duct tape. Just keep that in mind. Leave a bit of a tail, probably about three inches. And then you're going to go back. You're gonna go through the second hole, and go out through the fold. And then you're gonna go through the spine again, of the book. You're gonna push out through the spine. And you wanna make sure you pull this taut. And then you're gonna go down to the third hole, back through. And through your pages. And you might even have to kind of guide it a little with your other hand. Kind of feel the needle through. I'm gonna get some binder clips. They like to just cling onto everything. And you're gonna keep pulling it taut. But don't pull it too much, that you start pulling your tail through. You wanna keep that tail out there. Gonna do that down to your next hole. Through the pages, and then through the spine of the book. Just know that your thread may get caught on the corners of your book or other things that are around you. So just try to have some patience. So now I'm going through the bottom hole of the pages, and then back out through the cover. I'm pulling this back out, and making sure it's taut. But don't pull too tight, but just make sure that you don't have any loose areas or gaps in your

thread. You're gonna continue sewing through your second batch of pages, until you get to the very top hole, where we're gonna tie them off together. Cut the tails the same length so they're easier to knot. And you're just going to knot them a couple times together. Just using a basic knot, and I'm gonna do this a couple times. Maybe three, just to make sure that it's tied. You can cut these ties or add beads to them to add extra decoration to your spine. Just make sure when you're binding that you practice some patience. It can get a little bit of unwieldy and you might start to get a little bit frustrated. But that's okay. Just take it slowly and go step by step. Let's add a button to close our book, and make it a little bit more tidy. Just try to find a flat button, of any size will work. And you're gonna add it to the front of the book. So you're gonna punch a few holes there for the button. But you're also gonna add a couple holes in the back for your string. You can always take one of your extra pieces of wax linen thread to do this. And you're gonna need your awl again. Basically what I'm going to do, is just create a hole in the back with the awl. I'm gonna go all the way through. Make sure you don't pierce your pages. And make sure that your hole is big enough, so that you can get your thread through. You might even want to use your needle for this. That makes it a lot easier to do. So I'm just gonna tie it through, gonna leave a little tail so that I can tie a knot. This is one of those knots that you wanna really kind of make a bit bigger. Just so it doesn't pull through the hole. One more time. Okay. Now, gonna go around to the front of the book. And pretty much in the same area as the back cover, you're gonna go to the front cover, and pierce a hole. And I mean you could do several holes to match the button, or you could just do one hole. I'm gonna do one hole, for ease. I'm just gonna punch through. Make sure that you do this probably about a half inch in. Pierce through. And now, we're gonna need an extra piece of wax linen thread. It doesn't have to be real long. Gonna take our button. And you might wanna loop the thread through a couple of holes at least. Make sure it's on there. And then let's see if we can get this through this hole. Looks like we can. Yeah. And the other piece, the other end of it, push that through too. We're gonna pull this thread through the hole so that the button is really tight against the cover on the front. Inside the cover, take the two ends of the thread and tie them together in a knot a few times. Just so that you make sure that it's big enough that it won't sink through the hole. You can cut those ends off. You can even put a piece of duct tape over that, just to make sure that stays there. But now you have a really nice closure. Very easy. With your thread and your button. With a long tail for the closure, it'll make it a lot easier for you to add things. Because your book's gonna expand. These two journals are a great way to upcycle and use things around your house, and create really fun journals that you can just play in. If you're new to art journaling, try my four-week work-along course, where I go over painting, collage, and lettering to make your journals more you.