

OPEN STUDIO

Altered Books

Explore mixed media techniques and three-dimensional shapes by transforming old books into personalized works of art.



Materials

- Book
- Glue (e.g., glue stick, white glue, modge podge)
- White paint or gesso (optional)
- Drawing utensils
- Paper for collage (e.g., magazines, photographs, etc.)
- Ruler (optional)

Instructions

1. Pick your Book

Select a book from your library that you don't mind repurposing for this activity. Choosing a book with thick, absorbent paper and a sewn spine will keep your altered book sturdy as you change it. Books with illustrations and images can inspire your final artwork. Next, gather your materials and find a comfortable place to work on your book.

2. Prepare your Book Pages

Go through your book and rip out about every other page to make room to paint or collage into. For straight lines, you can use a ruler to tear your pages against as you remove them. Next, prepare your pages as you desire by thickening or painting your pages. To thicken pages, you can glue two or more pages together. If you would like to start with blank pages, you can paint your pages a single color to create a new background. Make sure you give your pages time to dry between coats.

3. Experiment

Now that your book is ready, you can start experimenting with adding your artwork to the book! Are you starting with a blank background? Does your book have text? Change the text by highlighting or removing words. Does your book have images or illustrations? Draw or collage to change these images. Add words, poems, drawings, or whatever you are inspired to create inside your book.

4. Personalize

Close your book and examine the cover. How will you make this your own? Paint or collage onto the cover to personalize your altered book. Then, write your name and today's date on the first page.

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

Share your altered book with us on social media using the hashtags #ConnectWithCAMH and #MuseumFromHome.