

Torn Paper Paintings with Terri Schmitt

A presentation to the Woman's Art Club of Cincinnati, October 9, 2021

My torn-paper collage paintings are made using many techniques. I make art papers using a gel printing plate and acrylic paint. These art papers are one-of-a-kind creations that I tear up and use like paint on a canvas. I strategically use subtle color shifts that are part of the painted papers when placing them in the finished painting. Torn paper is used like strokes of paint on a wood panel. The result is a painting with lots of depth and character. Your eyes mix the vibrant colors together to give you an impression of a moment in time.

The painting process
includes four main steps:

1. Road Map



*Make a value
sketch and create an
underpainting on a
gessoed wood panel.*

2. Painted Paper



*Create colorful pages
of art paper using
acrylic paint, a gel
printing plate, stamps,
stencils and various
found papers.*

3. Color Palette



*Rip your colored
papers into segments
of separate hues
and values. Organize
them in a way that
works for you.*



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4. Torn-Paper Painting



*Tear bits of colored
paper and use them like
paint on a brush. Glue
them onto the panel.*

Supplies

Gel Press gel printing plate

12x12 or 8x10

Acrylic paints

Master's Touch Fine Art Studio Acrylic

Golden Fluid Acrylics

Liquitex Basics Acrylic

Speedball 4-inch "Pop-In" brayer

Purchased and found papers

deli paper, old maps, book pages, sheet music, rice paper such as Yasutomo Hosho paper pad

Stencils, masks, foam stamps

www.joggles.com

Elizabeth St. Hilaire designs are awesome!

Texturizers

bubble wrap, corrugated cardboard, string, combs, etc.

Wood panels

Art Alternatives 8x8 cradled panel

Gesso

Liquitex Professional Clear Gesso

Flat and filbert old brushes

Cutting mat

Tips:

Gel Plate

- Keep the plastic clam-shell packaging for storing the gel plate
- Store the plate flat, in its clamshell, do not place anything heavy on top of it

Printing the Paper

- When printing your art papers, work quickly
- Everything prints backward, stamps, handwriting, stencils
- If you have a fan turned on in the room, your paint will dry too fast, turn off fans
- If you use a lot of glazing medium to make your colors more transparent, the papers will have a tendency to stick together. No amount of drying will eliminate this. But you can often pull them apart without much damage. The paint film strengthens the paper
- Transparent colors are great, including zinc white
- When mixing color for your papers, mix the paint on the gel plate using a brayer to stir it up, or mix your paint on a palette and transfer the mixed color with a palette knife
- Set up a little "clothes-line" with clips to dry your papers
- When papers are dry, use a metal ruler to trim and separate the different hues
- The paper feels precious at first, but it is not. Just tear it up and organize your palette
- Trade paper with your friends for more variation in your paintings!

Paint and Mediums

- I like to use both *Master's Touch Fine Art Studio Acrylic* colors and *Golden Fluid Acrylics*. The first one is light-medium body and comes in tubes with lids that snap shut. The second comes in bottles that also have snapping lids. *Liquitex Basics* are good consistency, but do not have the highest quality pigment
- Heavy bodied paints are too difficult to move around on the gel plate, they leave big blobs of color in your prints
- Tubes with screw-on lids are cumbersome to reattach properly, the snap lids are faster
- Start with full coverage of light colors, adding layers over the top of light colors, building intensity
- Think subtle contrast in color when you layer
- Fluid acrylics dry fast and if you roll them too much, they will pull off of the gel plate and stick to the brayer, which is a waste of paint

- Transparent colors from Golden create amazing color combinations when layered: I like to use zinc white, quinacridone magenta, quinacridone nickel azo gold, turquoise phthalo and indian yellow hue
- A little phthalo green or blue goes a long way!
- I like to have a few light bodied pale colors like *Master's Touch* dark titanium white, and ocean green, also *Liquitex Basics* iridescent graphite is nice to darken a printing plate

Tearing and Adhering paper

- Tear the paper shapes toward you for fewer white edges, tear the paper away from you for white edges
- Leave space around each piece of paper, or shingle them on top of one another
- Apply the matte medium to the wood panel in a moderate layer, then place the torn paper onto the matte medium, pressing down with the brush
- Cover the newly placed painted paper with another thin layer of matte medium
- Start with the background areas first, things farthest back in the picture plane. Move to the next closest item until you get to the items in the front, which you will do last. For instance, go in this order: background or wall, tabletop, napkin, bowl, fruit in the bowl
- You can refine an edge later when you tear the paper for objects that are forward in the picture plane
- If you have to remove a paper from the painting, the painted layer may come off and leave a thin layer of paper. This can be removed with a little water on a clean brush or it can be covered over with another piece of torn paper

Clean-Up

- Use white or gloss medium to lift old paint from gel plate
- Use extra strength packing tape to remove old paint from plate
- Don't worry about cleaning your brayer after each color, wipe the color off of the brayer onto an extra sheet of paper, then use it again
- The paper that you use to clean your brayer can be really beautiful as a base layer for another painted paper!
- I disassemble my pop-in brayers to clean them
- Use the blue Scott sponges with the white dots to clean brayers or soak the roller in Murphy's Oil Soap
- What do I do with all of these scraps? Hold onto pieces of colored paper that are larger than a quarter. You never know when you may use them. Just throw them in your bag. But don't make yourself crazy saving every last scrap!