

WHEN INSPIRATION RUNS DRY

# 21 Practical Ways to Reignite Creativity

ARTISTS GUIDE



Every artist experiences seasons where ideas feel distant, motivation is low, and the studio feels heavy. Knowing this is normal doesn't always make it easier to live through.

This guide brings together practical, low-pressure ways to gently reconnect with your creative practice. Think of these as tools rather than rules — small doorways back into making.



# 1 Reset Your Space

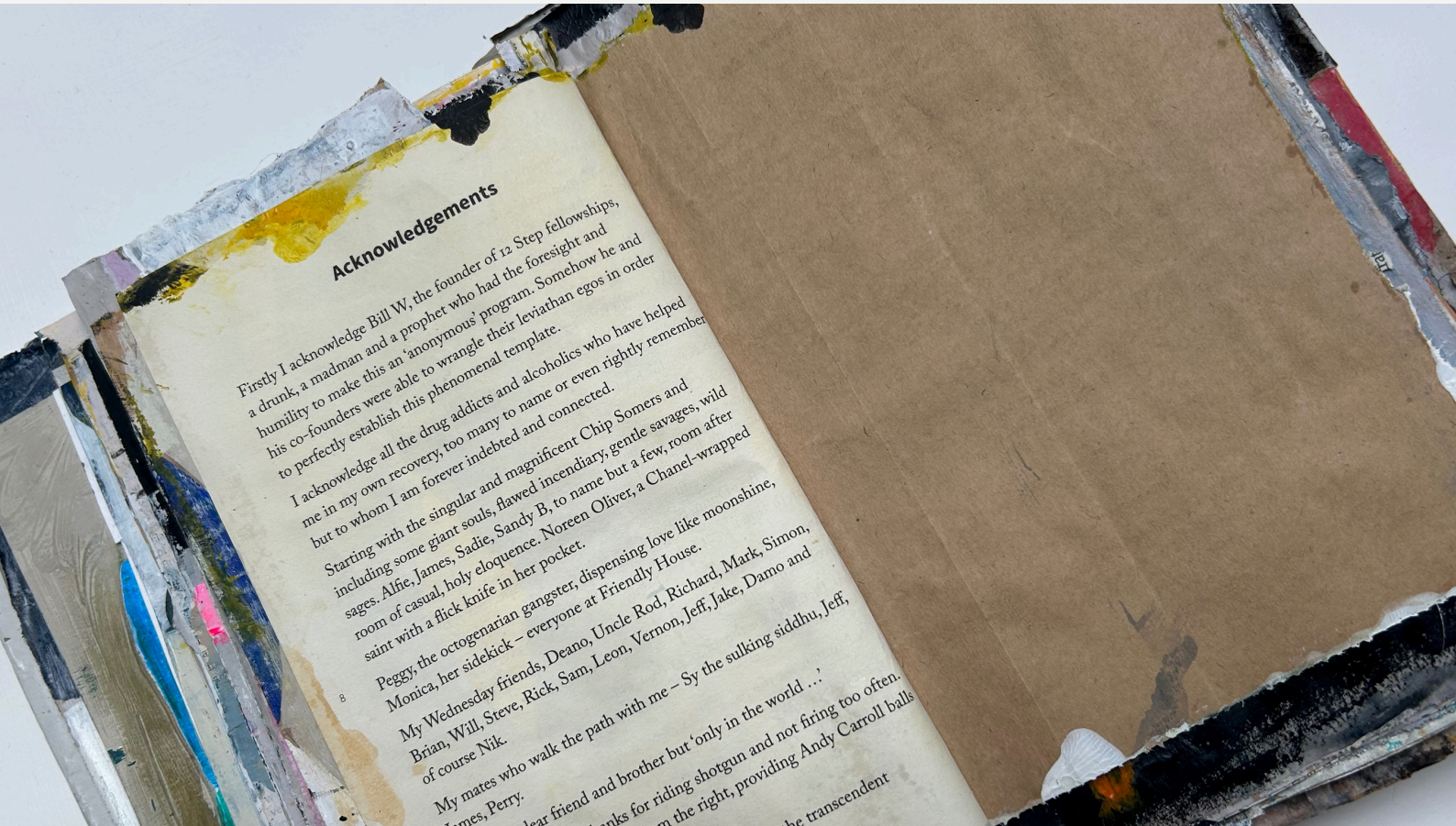
When your studio tips from creative chaos into overwhelming mess, tidy it. Clearing physical space often clears mental space.

You may also rediscover forgotten materials that spark new ideas.

## 2 Create Junk Journals

When you are feeling uninspired you often shy away from ‘wasting’ art materials. Creating sketchbooks from scrap materials — packing paper, envelopes, magazine pages, can be a liberating exercise.

Working on “throwaway” surfaces removes pressure and encourages play.



## 3 Make Lists

The pressure to be productive can be overwhelming. Sometimes something as simple as creating a list can help make you feel like you are moving forward.

Try lists like:

- Things that make me happy
- Ideas for future work
- Materials to experiment with
- Things I want to learn

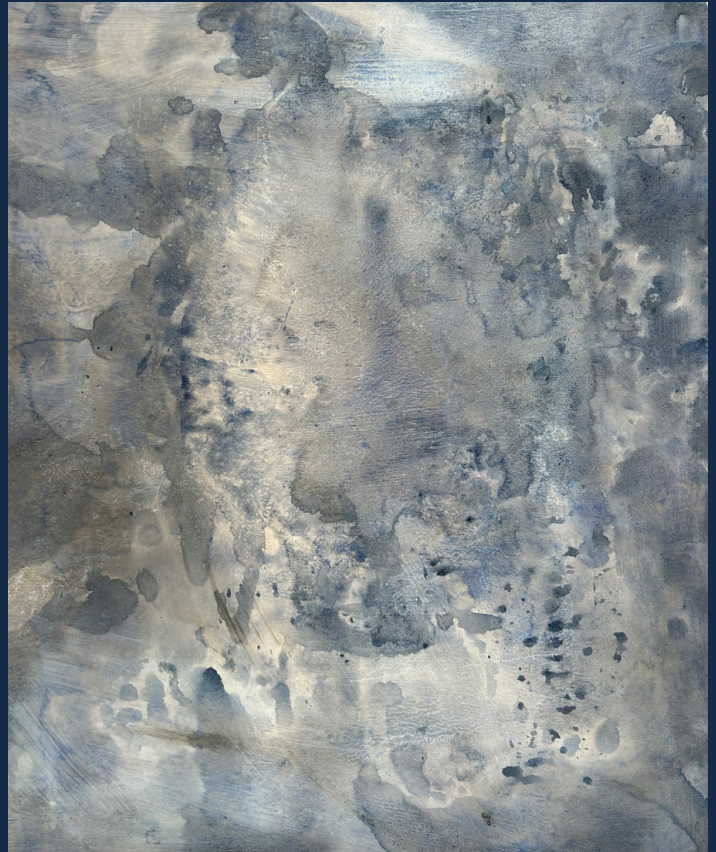
Lists create momentum without creative pressure.

# 4 Backgrounds Without Pressure

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Use large sheets to explore mark-making and movement. Swiping gestures, splashes, texture, dripping paint. Let yourself go without worrying about the end result.

You can use these for future paintings.



# 5 Learn Something New

Take pressure off by focusing on learning rather than producing finished work.

Compile your 'Things to Learn' list and keep it to hand so you can add to it when you see something exciting and new.

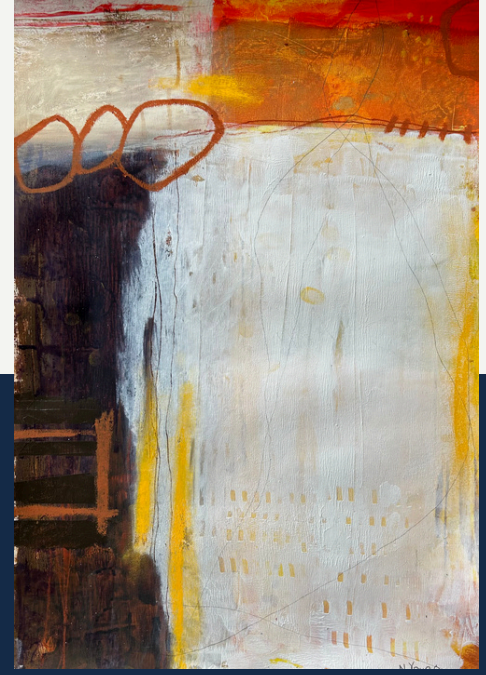
And you don't need to keep this art focused. If you've always fancied trying paddle boarding or bread making give yourself permission to carve out some time. Doing different things brings us alive and stepping outside of your comfort areas helps you to embrace risks.

## 6 Familiar Compositions

Revisit paintings that you love and rework successful compositions.

Change colours, reverse light and dark, alter scale.

Removing the pressure of composition allows you to focus on colour, texture, value contrast, saturation and a whole host of other things.



## 7 Finish Studio Tasks

We all have a lot of small tasks that we just don't get round to completing. If you're having a dip in creativity ticking some of these things off your 'To Do' list can be a satisfying way of feeling productive.

- Varnish or wax finished paintings.
- Update your art inventory
- Write a blog or newsletter
- Sort out your art supplies

Productive tasks build confidence and momentum.

## 8 Spend Some Time With Your Work

This exercise can be particularly useful if you haven't painted for a while. They get your reacquainted with your work. You might even learn something new about yourself.

Study your paintings:

- What is this work about?
- What works?
- Why do you connect with it?
- What would you change?
- What elements or marks reoccur throughout your work?

Its often easy to focus on the things you want to change so be mindful not to reinforce negative self-talk.

## 9 Collect Titles You Love

Write down phrases or titles that resonate. This can be both a source of inspiration for new work but also helps when it comes to finishing paintings.

Do any of these titles excite you?

Are they generating ideas for new work?

Are you seeing any themes emerge?

# 10 Spend an Morning Colour Swatching <sup>07</sup>

As artists we are drawn to colour - darks and lights, saturated and unsaturated. Gift yourself a session with the sole purpose of exploring colour:

Mix colours without intent to paint. Create colour combinations that speak to you. You can even cut out colours from magazines and challenge yourself to create these yourself. It helps you understand colour better and is a great resource. Just remember to note down what colours you used and rough ratios for future use.



# 11 Journal (in your own way)

This doesn't have to be traditional journalling. Use it to empty negative thoughts onto paper. Write a list of art supplies you're running low on. Whatever pops into your head.

# 12 Slow Down

Step away from productivity goals.

Ideas often emerge in pauses.

Give yourself time to breath.



# 13 Go your a Walk

Movement and fresh air reset your mind. Tune in to your surroundings.

- What do you see?
- What do you hear?
- What do you smell?
- What do you feel?

Nature rhythms can calm and energise at the same time.

# 14 Try a Craft

Try a craft you once loved or try something new...

- Paper crafts - card making, paper mache
- Textures - Sewing, felting
- Take a pottery class
- Maybe experiment with wire work

Different processes unlock new thinking.

# 15 Use Collage as Low Energy Making

When painting feels too demanding, collage is accessible and playful. Collage gives you the freedom to move papers around and try new compositions or colour combinations with no commitment.

Take it a stage further and experiment with grid journals. Draw small boxes on a page and challenge yourself to create a number of tiny compositions.

Making collage papers is also a great “go to’s” on uninspired days. They don’t require any planning, and even “bad” collage papers often become useful later.



# 16 Immerse Yourself in Books

Art books.

Creativity books.

Books about artists you don’t know yet.

Learning still counts as creative progress.

# 17 Gather Visual Inspiration

Photograph textures, surfaces, objects, light.

Print them into grids for low-energy studio days.



# 18 Set Yourself Constraints

The blank page or canvas can be daunting, especially when you are low on inspiration so limiting your options can really help.

Limit:

- The colours you use
- The time you have
- Materials
- Number of marks

Restrictions often create freedom.

# 19 Copy Work You Admire

Start by copying closely.

Then deliberately change direction.

This builds technical understanding and confidence.

# 20 Give Yourself Permission to Experiment

Play with unfamiliar tools or materials.

Watch how paint behaves without controlling it.

Why not try making your own brushes and mark making tools?



# 21 Create a Rescue Box

Fill it with:

- Inspiring photos
- Favourite collage papers
- Old sketchbook pages
- Colour palette ideas
- Found objects

Build it slowly. Use it when motivation is low.

# Final Thought

Being uninspired is not failure. It is part of the creative cycle.

Creativity isn't constant output.

It is curiosity.

It is openness.

It is being gentle with yourself until the spark returns.

**Just remember.....**

**"You can't use up  
creativity.  
The more you use,  
the more you have"**

Maya Angelou