

Hello hello helloOo !

I am so happy and honored to be able to send you this, because this means you gave me your trust by signing in for my news letter!

I am an architect, artist and philanthropist, still working as an architect every day restoring monuments as a living. In my free time I make art : drawings and paintings. I also volunteer in an art workshop in a rest home for people with dementia. I draw and paint with them and give them human connection and a way to express themselves.

But most of all I want to commit myself to share my love of making art with as many people as possible.

Being a child I always wanted to become an artist, but thanks to my parents who pushed me into university I became an architect... I write now “thanks to” instead of “because of”, because I am an eternal optimist, but during a couple of years I was quite unhappy about it. Studying architecture was a lot of fun, but by the time I started working, ink and paper made place for the computer and I lost my drawing skills quite quickly.

Needing money to live, I worked in an architect office and forgot about drawing and painting, feeling uneasy about it, thinking I lost it all.

But one day, after about 15 years doing nothing about it, my husband came home with a beautiful watercolor set, brushes and fine watercolor paper as a surprise. I locked myself up in my room night after night after coming home from work, trying to make some “art” again. I have hidden my paintings for a long time because I thought I lost all my skills and found them looking horrible!

I struggled myself through tutorials, workshops with several artists, doing loads of work, struggling to find “my style”, asking myself loads of questions... being stressed and full of doubt...

Maybe I can make all this a bit lighter for you, and the way to your inner artist a bit shorter and more fun and joyful?

Drawing and painting gave a real new dimension to my life. I want to transmit this. It is really a universal language, making you connect to the world AND to yourself. Because You have a special artist in you that the world wants to see. You can make the world more beautiful in your own way!

Everybody is an artist and can draw! I firmly believe this! And the more you do it, the better it feels and the better your art will look. Drawing is merely a matter of looking carefully at what you want to draw.

And everybody is creative! You just have to find a way to get rid of the fears that prevent you from living your creative life with joy. And I don't mean that you have to become a full time artist or that you have to dedicate your life to the arts. I just mean living life with joy and curiosity and connection.



thank you !

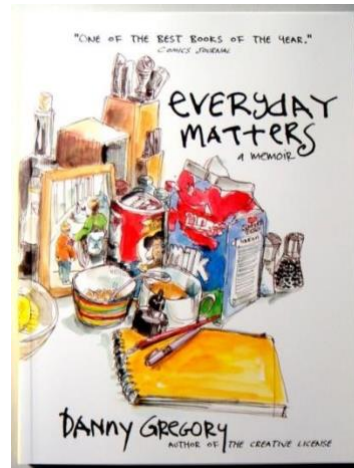
Here I share tips and some drawings of several sketchbooks. They are all quite different. I hope they give you some inspiration to dive into it and don't let yourself be impressed by the blank page :-)

1. Work work work !

Don't fear judgments of beauty or lack of drawing techniques!

A good book to start working is Danny Gregory's "Everyday matters". Danny tells a very beautiful life story here and shows how he starts drawing, and how drawing "saved" his life. Every drawing tells a story and has value. It doesn't have to be an Art work with a big "A".

This book helped me a lot and gave me a boost of energy to work and go for it!



2. Get out of your comfort zone!

Try new challenges regularly and take your time to accomplish them on your own rhythm.

You will be so proud afterwards and feel so inspired and free!



3. Explore your feelings by trying out different techniques and subjects

Don't try to reinvent the wheel!

Learn from other artists you love: look carefully at what they make and how it is made and try to imitate it! That's what artists have been doing since forever!

Copy other people's drawings and paintings to learn, from a book or from pictures, by doing workshops or from videos on internet! (don't however pretend it is your design....). This watercolour is inspired by the work of Pat Southern Pearce.



thank you !

4. Make a sketchbook: this helps to overcome the “fear” of the white page and to keep track of your evolution

Buy or make a nice sketchbook and draw regularly in it. This way you keep track of your artistic evolution and you make great memories, keeping an art journal!

Here is a page I made the day of my 40th birthday, drawing my drawing table.

Draw, paint, experiment in your sketchbook and don't be afraid to “ruin” it: it's just paper...



5. Try urban sketching to share your work and show & tell

Here is a picture of an urban sketch of mine last May 2024 in Portugal.

I have spend years drawing hidden at home, ashamed to show my stuff and afraid to draw in public, because people would come over to look and laugh at my wrong drawings! But here is the truth about what happens when people see someone draw in public: they come to look and ADMIRE you, even if you're a beginner! You make great connections and you get compliments. People RESPECT your work!

I just wish I had discovered this earlier!
If you like company of other drawing people meet up with the Urban Sketchers:
www.urbansketchers.org !
We are all over the world, showing it one drawing at a time. It is a very joyful and supportive community. Try “sketchwalks” :-)



Some art supply stories...



My first palette...
Received from my husband :-)

I never clean my palettes really.
Some artists swear by “clean” watercolors and a bright clean palette.
I don’t.

Then this habit was reinforced by the workshops I did with artists Jeanine Gallizia and Joseph Zbukvic. They also work with “dirty” palettes.
“Dirty” palettes make interesting colors!
When you make a palette, take the time to make a paper with your color list, because when the colors are dry you don’t see them very well.

Today I almost only work with tube paint and fill the palette myself. I find tube paint smoother to work with.



Me on a workshop... Workshops are terribly inspiring
It’s interesting to try workshops of different kinds of artists to push your boundaries



This is the palette of another artist I admire, Lars Lerin, that convinces me never to clean my palettes :-)



This is my big palette for working at home or to make large paintings outside. It is filled with tube paint.
Mainly Winsor & Newton artists quality paint. Also some Holbein and Kremer colors.
Put all the reds and the blues together in your palette



thank you !



When I go Urban Sketching or painting outside however I take my pocket palettes so reduce the weight I have to carry. They are really light: 51 grams each.

The Pocket Palette features a mixing surface, 14 removable pans on a magnetic base, the size of a credit card holder. As they are so small, I made one with “reds” and one with “blues”.



The pocket palette “in action” in Japan on the fish market in Tokyo

When I travel I use travel brushes with a cap, or waterbrushes: brushes with a watercontainer.



Brushes ! I am addicted to them ! I could buy thousands if I had the money :-))

Squirrel and goat hair to make washes, synthetic and sable hair with really fine points to paint details...

Brands I use: japanese brushes, Winsor & Newton, Escoda, Raphael, Kremer,...

Raphael has a good and quite cheap line of brushes called “Softaqua”, with synthetic hair that feels like Squirrel.

For drawing I love pencil but also ink and ballpoint pens



Sketchbooks!

I used for a long time Watercolor Moleskine sketchbooks, but other sketchbooks will do as well, as long as the paper is thick enough. If you want to use watercolor, take explicit watercolor paper. If you want to use color pencils, take smoother paper. I love “accordeon” or “leporello” sketchbooks because at the end you have a long piece of art!



thank you !

Art for dementia project

Drawing and painting are universal languages, and kind of a meditation! In my “art for dementia”-project I volunteer in an art workshop for people with dementia. They cannot talk any more but when we make art together, we are in strong connection and communication with each other and we do have a lot of fun! This is me in our workshop :-)

If you want advice to start a workshop like this in a place near your place, or privately at home with your family & friends, I'll be happy to help you.

Let's have some fun together!

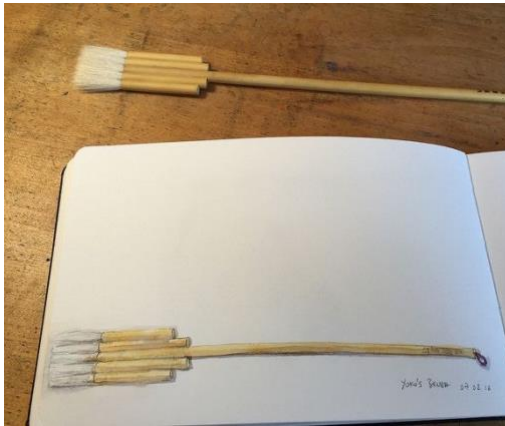


thank you !

CALL TO ACTION !

Here are some actions you can take:

1. Sometimes the first steps are the hardest. I like to draw a simple object at home to warm up for the day or to relax, as a meditation, or to get you out of the “what to do” confusion. Choose an object that you like, or that has a particular meaning for you, and draw it. Look carefully at the details and shadows, without however being obsessed to make a photographically correct drawing. Personally I love sketching TEACUPS and ART SUPPLIES!



Tip: focus on the object you are drawing and not on the drawing itself. Observe the shapes and patterns and let your hand move freely, keeping your hand from touching the page. It will encourage spontaneity and freedom of the lines.

2. If you don't have much time, divide your sketchbook page in smaller squares and make thumbnail sketches of whatever comes into your mind: sketch thumbnails!



thank you !

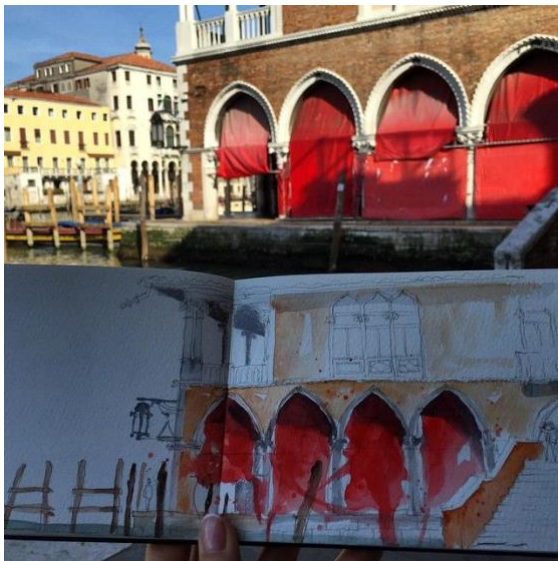
3. Draw something larger inside the house, like for example your kitchen. Don't be overwhelmed by all the details: don't try to draw everything...



4. Go outside and draw. If the weather is too cold, or I don't find a comfortable spot, I often make just the drawing outside and put the color at home, comfortably on my table :-)

Again : try not to be obsessed and overwhelmed by the details. Nobody will come to check out if your drawing is “correct”. Besides: we're not copymachines. We have to make an “**interpretation**” from what we see, and not draw everything like it is. Also, **be lazy**: leave things out to give air to your sketch. Try to figure out the important parts so that you recognize the object/building, and what will be your focus point?

My focus points for the left drawing, the fish market in Venice, were the red curtains and the wooden poles in the water (to make sure people see it's Venice... :-)), And for the Hiroshima memorial on the right, my focus points were the cupola and the structure of the building, so it would look like a ruin.



thank you !

What drawing and painting tips would help you ?

Which is your story and how can I inspire you ?

I am very interested to hear from you!

Write me at info@barbaraluel.com

Please share this information with your friends if you think they would like it or it might be useful to them

Love,



Barbara

www.barbaraluel.com



thank you !