

## **New Course Proposal: Artists' Books and Visual Journals**

Visual Arts Department

Brookline High School

**Mission Statement:** Making art is good for you. Making art allows you to explore and express what it is to be human in all the complexity that that implies. In addition to the creative thinking and making skills that working in the art studio affords, there are a whole host of physical, mental, and emotional benefits that arise from a robust artmaking practice. This is the work that many of our students need to be doing right now.

**Identified Inclusion Need:** In departmental collecting of data about equity and inclusion in our art classes it has been revealed that some of our most vulnerable students in special populations such as those in Winthrop House and Supported Learning Center are having difficulty enrolling, attending, and doing well in our visual arts courses for a variety of reasons. These populations of students often have strong artists among their ranks and the SEL skills these students are trying to acquire are embedded within the learning in visual arts classes. We know from conversations with program leaders, affected students, and guidance counselors that this population needs to have art classes where the class size is smaller and critiques and conversations are less public/exposed in order to mitigate social anxiety. They need courses, where the curriculum can be successfully accessed at any point in the semester and projects that are portable so there is an opportunity for educational continuity if learning is disrupted by extended absences. They also need courses where projects offer structure while allowing students the opportunity to practice SEL skills and find intrinsic motivation for expressing themselves visually. This course is designed to address these challenges and has the potential to become a bridge for students with these learning needs to feel more comfortable and confident working in our visual arts classes in the UAB.

### **Course Description**

**Artist's Books and Journals** - Artist's books are handmade, thematic, interactive, and self-contained - they allow artists to tell stories, with and without text, that explore their personal interests and experiences. In this class, we will be learning a variety of techniques for creating artist's books and using them to reflect on and express how we experience our inner and outer worlds. We will be making our own visual journals and we will use those journals throughout the course to practice, experiment, collect ideas, and reflect as we grow into the artists we want to be.

(One Semester Course, .5 Credit, 12 Student Limit, No Prerequisite)

## Proposed Course Summary/Outline

**Essential Understandings:** Artists tell the stories of who we are and what we value. They tell stories that are personal and universal. These stories promote empathy and understanding of self and others.

Project and Timeframe	Concepts, Skills, and Processes	SEL Skills	Connections and References
<b>Visual Journals</b> <i>Plow Fold Construction</i>  (On-going, self-directed, one volume per semester)	<p>An artist's visual journal is a portable art studio used to explore ideas and develop curiosity.</p> <p>It allows students space to practice with materials, experiment with ideas, collect images that inspire them, reflect on their learning, and pursue their curiosity and develop their capacity to wonder.</p>	<p>Self Awareness - understanding themselves and their motivations'</p> <p>Self Management - mitigate anxiety and develop a growth mindset</p> <p>Responsible Decision Making - Develop self-agency</p>	<p><a href="#">The Isolation Journals</a></p> <p><a href="#">Making Art is Good For You</a></p>
<b>Zines and Guerilla Publishing</b> Classic One-Page Zine, Copier Publishing  (3 Weeks)	<p>A Zine is a self-published story that allows the artist to share their perspective and find community.</p> <p>We will begin with individual mini zines then work with printmaking and copier techniques to create a collaborative zine that explores interests and common experiences as we build the creative community of the classroom.</p>	<p>Self Awareness - understanding your own emotions, thoughts, values, and experiences</p> <p>Relationship Skills - making a positive connection with others</p> <p>Social Awareness - the ability to empathize and take the perspective of others.</p>	<p><a href="#">Brief History of Zines</a></p>

<b>Altered Books</b> Found books with alterations  (3 Weeks)	<p>Altered books art artists' works that begin with an existing book to form the structure of the work while they use that found book to inspire the alterations and insights.</p> <p>We will be using collage and sculptural assemblage techniques to alter existing books. Working with the existing text gives students the opportunity to think flexibly and improvisationally, they can free-associate words and images to create meaning in a process that is both playful and insightful</p>	<p>Responsible Decision Making - improvisational and flexible thinking and planning.</p> <p>Relationship Skills - listening/reading well and communicating effectively</p> <p>Self Awareness - understanding strengths and weaknesses</p>	<a href="#">Altered Book Talk - TedTalk</a>
<b>The Story I Need To Hear</b> Accordion Book  (3 Weeks)	<p>An accordion book allows artists to show work in individual pages or as a continuous and connected layout of images.</p> <p>Students will consider the stories that they tell themselves about themselves and how they might change or alter that story.</p> <p>We will be using watercolor techniques and ideas will be explored through visual symbolism, analogy, and metaphor - they may include text or not.</p>	<p>Self Awareness - recognizing how your thoughts and feelings impact behavior</p> <p>Self Management - stress management, organizational skills, your ability to set goals, impulse control, and self-discipline</p>	<a href="#">Charles Mackesy</a>  <a href="#">The Accordion Book Project</a>
<b>Artifacts of Memory</b> Hardcover album binding/ Japanese stab-binding  (3 Weeks)	<p>How do we carry our past with us? How does it inform who we are in the present? The ephemera we collect and hang onto in life speaks to our experience of a particular time, place, person, or experience.</p> <p>Students will learn papermaking techniques that infuse collected materials/memories into the paper itself to create meaning,</p>	<p>Self Awareness -understanding the experiences that shape our sense of self.</p> <p>Relationship Skills - honoring and investigating the people and places that affect our sense of self</p> <p>Responsible Decision Making</p>	<a href="#">Handmade Paper</a>  <a href="#">Envelope Book</a>

	Various cutting, folding and sewing techniques will allow for the inclusion of three-dimensional objects within the book.	-putting experiences into context and thinking about how they inform future decisions	
<b>Into the Woods</b> Tunnel book  (3-4 weeks)	<p>Myths and Fairytales transport us to another world and allow us to look at the challenges and dilemmas of life through metaphor and symbol.</p> <p>When you open a tunnel book it draws you into a layered sense of space with physical layers that you look through. Students will work with optical perspective (foreground, middleground, background) as well as visual metaphor and to create a world inviting escape to or from.</p>	<p>Self Management - reflecting upon responsible decision making, impulse control, and self discipline</p> <p>Responsible Decision Making - planning, goal setting, envisioning a variety of solutions</p>	<p><a href="#">Tunnel Books</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Benefits of Fairy Tales</a></p> <p>The Power of Myth - Joseph Campbell</p>
<b>In It Together</b> Star Binding	<p>We sometimes get caught in our own stories and fail to see that others also have similar experiences.</p> <p>A star binding creates a three dimensional book of separate but interrelated and layered pages. Working with pattern and image we will work to develop unity and variety between the pages.</p>	<p>Social Awareness - empathizing with others and taking the perspective of others.</p> <p>Relationship Skills - ability to make positive connections, consider the emotions, thoughts and values of others.</p>	<a href="#">Starbook Binding</a>
<b>Surprise</b> <b>Surprise</b> Pop-up Book	<p>Thinking playfully and flexibly allows us to roll with whatever challenges come our way - in art and in life. There is nothing more surprising and delightfully playful than a pop-up book.</p> <p>Paper engineering, disruptive thinking, surprise, play, movement.</p>	<p>Self Management - thinking playfully and flexibly to reduce stress</p> <p>Self Awareness- disruption of detrimental thought patterns, choosing joy</p>	<p><a href="#">Paper Engineering</a></p> <p><a href="#">Pop Up Books</a></p>