

# THE ESSENTIAL ART BOOK FOR THE FRUGAL ARTIST & CRAFTER

(or Now You Can Be an Artist AND Still Eat!)

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Hi and thanks so much for downloading my little e-book. Just a quick note before we begin that this is, and always will remain a FREE book, I have chosen to distribute under the CREATIVE COMMONS license, which means YOU may share it with anybody you wish as long as you do not alter the contents. I do not claim to \*own\* any of the tips or material here, but do own the rights to the compilation.

If you have an art related tip, not already mentioned here, and you would like to see it included, email me [jan@janfoxdesigns.com](mailto:jan@janfoxdesigns.com)

So, you are someone who feels a little thrill when you discover some cool tip for saving money to use in your art, you are going to love delving into the pages here! LOL

I have been an artist for 15 years now and one of my favourite things about making art is that there are always new things to explore and learn. It is NEVER boring and always wonderful to discover some exciting new (or new to me) technique, tool or tip and if that also saves me some dollars, well I'm in HEAVEN!!

I have always had an inquiring mind - you know the \*I wonder what would happen if\* voice inside my head (or is that just me? LOL), or in my case, often \*well THAT didn't work out, so how can I do it differently?\* This often means experimenting with what I have lying around to solve the problem and, using what I have already have, means saving money. WIN/WIN!!

Something else that has lead me to look for other, more accessible ways of duplicating a technique, tool or product, is that I am an Aussie artist and being so far away from the US, which often seems to be hub of \*NEW & INTERESTING\* stuff, means that the newest and greatest is not often readily available here. I just **hate** reading about some wonderful new thing that I can't have yet (or perhaps never have due to differing electrical voltages, etc). That whining inner child just starts and won't let up til I \*find a way\*! LOL

This book consists of many tips I have read or seen over the years, along with many more of my own discoveries. ENJOY!







**SOLUTION:** Create an easy shelf by supporting a piece of suitable lighter wood or other material at both ends (and in the middle if longer length) on a tower of little plastic bins (similar to those shown below which are often used in workshops for nails, screws, etc), stacked and secured together.



**SOLUTION:** Think metal baking tray and magnets! Mount the tray/s and stick a small magnet on whatever light items you wish to store. You could even glue the magnets on the lids of small containers

**SOLUTION:** Make yourself a French bulletin board. Use a piece of corkboard or similar material that will take a pushpin and use lengths of ribbon or fabric tape to create a diamond pattern in a crisscross motion, securing ribbon with a pushpin each time the ribbon crosses another. Hang on the wall or back of door to enable you to tuck your notes, ideas, pic of projects or use it as an inspiration board. Of course you may cover it with pretty fabric or pretty it up however you wish. Think about creating custom shapes to fit those awkward, unused wall spaces or a loooooong thin one for the back of a door.



**SOLUTION:** Pegboard makes excellent storage for hanging items on too. Simply push pegs, hooks or nails and you have lots of versatile hanging space

**SOLUTION:** Over the door shoe storage makes great additional storage too. You can often find these at garage sales and thrift stores

**SOLUTION:** For a cheap and effective desk, use a core door or similar and suspend between two filing cabinets or those plastic stacking drawer units.

**SOLUTION:** Attach square or rectangular baskets or even bright plastic buckets to walls, with opening facing out for a decorative and useful storage system

**SOLUTION:** Attach a towel rail to the wall or back of door and hang containers with S hooks from the rail to create attractive and practical storage. The containers will need to either have a hanging hole or tag, or be made of material you can drill a hole into. Our old



Cut the trays into small pieces to use for Paper Tole, or similar effects on cards, etc, where you want the item to be 3D. Similar to foam tape or glue dots.

These trays also make wonderful frames or mats for photos, etc, if covered with pretty paper.

Use them for *\*Shrinky\** art. They shrink very quickly and easily and used styrofoam coffee cups make wonderful Snowman hats! Do use a dedicated toaster oven in the garage or a heat gun outside as the fumes are evil and I suspect - toxic!

You can use the soft thinner Styrofoam packing material that usually comes in sheets around your new TV or similar electronic toy in your mixed media pieces as it is easily stitched and creates an interesting *\*quilted\** effect. Also can be used as padding for Art quilts, etc.

The larger pieces or blocks of Styrofoam can be used to make beautiful lightweight signs or other 3D surfaces to paint upon. Greatly used for theatre props and window dressers, we artists can use it too! Makes beautiful planter boxers that look like but have the weight of feathers! There is great information at EHow on what to use for sealer, etc. and the pic below came from Instructables site where you will find the tutorial.



**SOLUTION:** If you metal emboss embellishments or jewellery, try using recycled aluminium trays. They are perfect thickness and emboss beautifully! Also try using recycled soda cans or empty tea lights in the same way. Another free source of metal to emboss is the “ peel off” lids of yoghurt and cream containers - and they are already beautifully round! Heavy gel medium sticks this kind of metal.

Recycle that old pasta machine you found at the back of your cupboard or look out for one at the garage sales to use as a substitute *\*Cuttlebug\** embossing machine.

Make your own embossing folders too! Do a Google search on homemade embossing folder to find *\*how to\** tutorials on Youtube or other sites. Easy and very economical as you only use scrap cardboard, a plastic sheet and some glue! And you can make whatever texture YOU want!

**SOLUTION:** Want to use that, oh so cool, alcohol ink but either can't find it or it's too expensive to have more than a few colours? Solution is to make your own from cheap \*Sharpie\* type markers. Easy and fun and you can make a ton (sheer poetry to your ears!) Watch how to do it here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/ianfox1>

**SOLUTION:** Soak cardboard recycled egg containers in warm water until they go to mush (encourage with a blender if necessary) and then use the material as \*paper mache\* to make cool embellishments (try pouring into cookie cutters) or pour onto a tray to make book covers for journals.

**SOLUTION:** Use your junk mail as an art surface. Simply cover the more sturdy catalogue type pages with gesso and you are good to go! Free paper! Also consider leaving parts of the page showing. Perhaps a word or image might spark an idea for a painting! Newspaper can be used in the same way or use it to cover your workspace. I clean my brushes, test paint colours and markers, roll off excess paint from brayers and clean stencils on my sheets. Sometimes they end up as pretty cool jumping off points for a piece of abstract art or journal page!

Shown below is one of my \*drop sheets\* in the process of transformation. To see the whole thing evolve, go to <http://www.youtube.com/user/ianfox1>



**SOLUTION:** Save those coloured and pretty plastic shopping bags. They can be fused together with the help of a hot iron and a couple of non-stick Teflon or silicone coated sheets (Glad Bake in Aus) to make plastic \*paper\*. Cut up the bags into strips of varying sizes and lay them onto the non-stick sheet in a pleasing design. Add some bits of foil, cellophane or other suitable items if you wish. Cover with another non-stick sheet and iron away! Do be careful of the fumes and do this in a well-ventilated area though.

**SOLUTION:** Take a second look at those swing tags we usually throw away after purchasing an item. Some can be reused as a tag in a mixed media piece by covering with gesso, but leaving the pretty bits showing (or not) depending upon your mood. Pretty postcards or business cards that we can often pick up while shopping or sometimes come in the mail can be used in the same way.

**SOLUTION:** Recycle milk or juice cartons. Once washed, cut the bottom off to create a handy throw away container for paint or mediums. Cut the body of the container into pieces for a palette. Great for loading floats!





- SOLUTION:** Want to test how adding something extra to your canvas or piece will look? Use an acetate sheet to place over your work and paint on that. Stand back to see the result of how it will look when painted on the actual piece.
- SOLUTION:** Hate the fumes from that toxic spray can paint? Want to be able to spray through stencils, decorate cards or create cool backgrounds inside, safely, easily and with virtually no mess AND with COMMON marker pens??? Watch how here:  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/janfox1>
- SOLUTION:** Don't ruin your good brushes with masking fluid. Dipping the brush into dishwashing liquid before applying the fluid will protect it from harm.
- SOLUTION** If you tend to always get paint up into the ferrule of your brush, dip your brush into retarder or glycerine and work up into the ferrule. Leave in brush to allow the paint to release easily.
- SOLUTION:** If you have sad looking brushes with bent bristles, dip QUICKLY into boiling water and reshape. Allow to dry for a \*good as new\* brush.
- SOLUTION:** Protect your brush between uses by rubbing a pure soap bar through bristles, shape and store.
- SOLUTION:** Use greaseproof or deli paper as palette paper
- SOLUTION:** Place your palette with any unused acrylic paint into an airtight container and store in refrigerator for later use. Mist occasionally if storing for an more than a week. If needed, you can even freeze it for a longer period.
- SOLUTION:** A fluffy makeup/blusher brush makes a great mop brush at a fraction of the cost!