

AFAM FROM HOME

Art From the Everyday

Self-taught artists frequently reuse and reimagine found materials in their work. These five prompts feature resourceful and innovative approaches to making art from the everyday.



Untitled, Philadelphia Wireman, c. 1970-1982.

1. Assemble a Sculpture from Found Materials

Wire, paper, foil, and nails are among the found materials that an anonymous artist known as the “Philadelphia Wireman” used to create this intriguing sculpture. It is one of over 1,200 small-scale works fashioned from wire and discarded materials, which were discovered after being seemingly abandoned in Philadelphia in the late 1970s. What everyday materials could you use to create your own assemblage?

Choose a few different materials found either in your home, yard, or immediate environment and create a unique sculpture of your own by winding, wrapping, and weaving materials together. Were you drawn to any particular object? What were some things that came to mind while you were creating this piece?



2. Capture Community Atmosphere

Purvis Young was a self-taught artist from Miami, Florida. He was deeply inspired by his community and often created artwork that drew inspiration from his neighborhood of Overtown and the people who lived there. In *People Celebrating*, Young uses bold, bright colors and rhythmic, expressive lines to emphasize movement and emotion. What feelings come to mind when you look at this painting?

Look outside your window, and try painting or drawing a feeling or movement inspired by your neighborhood. What imagery did you choose? What marks did you make? What colors did you use and why?



3. Compose A Still Life

Decorative surfaces and saturated colors abound in this still life with a flower-filled pitcher and two very elaborate glass goblets. **Still lifes** bring together everyday objects—both natural and manmade—prized for their personal or symbolic value, and/or their visual and material beauty.

Compose a still life with a few objects that you have around your home and draw or photograph them. What objects did you choose and why? How did you arrange them? What do these objects say about you?



4. Create A Collage

Henry Darger was a self-taught artist who found inspiration in children's coloring books, newspapers, and magazines. Darger traced these found images and incorporated them into his work. In this fantasy landscape, *175 At Jennie Richee*, Darger portrays a group of children, whose forms he traced and placed in a dreamy field full of towering, vibrant flowers.

Flip through a magazine or any printed media you have around your home and clip out a few images that speak to you. Trace these or combine them in new ways in a mixed media collage. Is your scene a real place or a fantasy? Who will (or won't) be there?



Untitled, Michel Nedjar, 1986.

5. Cardboard as Canvas

Michel Nedjar used cardboard as the base for this untitled oil pastel drawing. Nedjar is an artist who creates both two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms reusing found and cast off materials for each. For works on paper, he has drawn and painted images on envelopes, wallpaper sample sheets, and record sleeves. Here, **stylized faces** appear in a swirling mass of marks and color, and the cardboard is entirely obscured by thickly built-up layers of pastel.

Look around your apartment or house. What materials do you have that could be repurposed? Stacks of old mail, cardboard boxes in the recycling, magazines from many months ago? Choose one as your base. How does the materials and its surface impact your drawing, painting, or collage? Is the material still visible or has your artwork taken over?