

Art Play

Giving Comfort to Mistakes

By Stephanie Porcello

OVERVIEW

It can be difficult to simply play and create art without worrying about the outcome. I created this art exercise to help me loosen up and keep going when I made mistakes.

The general idea of this art play exercise is to experiment with your materials. Anything goes! When you feel like you make an error or something you don't like, pause and figure out how to give that mistake comfort. During the activity, you will learn several strategies. It might even start to feel like a choose-your-own-adventure game when you make mistakes!

It is my hope that this activity helps you reshape how you react to making mistakes when you are creating. Have fun!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

I've created a free Mistake Reflection Journal. If you would like to explore your mindset around mistakes even more, please visit: www.StephaniePorcelloArt.com/mistakes.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Limited materials
 - a. Be picky, choose your favorites
 - b. 2-3 items per category below
 - c. Use what you have
2. General categories:
 - a. Color: paint, crayons, magazines
 - b. Draw: pencil, charcoal, pen
 - c. Tools: paintbrush, scraper, smoother
 - d. Misc: canvas, paper

3. List of materials I have used:
 - a. 3 canvas panels (8 x10 inch)
 - b. Color: Acrylic Paint
 - i. White
 - ii. 2 shades of blue
 - iii. warm beige
 - iv. wild card- neon green
 - c. Draw:
 - i. 6B Pencil
 - ii. Charcoal
 - d. Scrape
 - i. Bottom of paintbrush
 - ii. Screwdriver
 - e. Smooth
 - i. Gift card

ART ACTIVITY:

1. Gather your materials
2. This is an abstract art activity. The idea is to experiment with your supplies to create intuitive shapes and colors on your canvas. If you would like to create something more realistic, feel free to use a reference photo. If you would like a reference photo, I created a pdf of several beautiful landscapes from my personal vacation photos. Use them however they inspire you! You can find them at: www.StephaniePorcelloArt.com/mistakes
3. Begin creating. Jump right in or choose an idea below:
 - a. Create a circle with your favorite color
 - b. Close your eyes and make a mark
 - c. Look at a reference photo and draw a pattern you love
4. Keep experimenting and creating, switching supplies often, until you feel that you have made an error.
5. **Action Plan:** If you make a mistake, immediately choose one of the following:
 - a. Pause (stop creating or switch to a new project)
 - b. Reflect: what did you think or feel when you made the mistake? Take note of any tension in your body.
 - c. Give the mistake comfort. **See next step.**
6. Ways to give a mistake comfort

- a. Give the mistake a friend. Duplicate the mistake several other times on your canvas. A mistake doesn't stand out so much when it's not alone.
 - b. Place your favorite color, shape, design, line or collage piece next to or directly on top of the mistake. Notice if you feel any differently about the mistake.
 - c. Hold the mistake's hand. Close your eyes and make any kind of mark near the mistake. This makes me feel like my heart is doing the creating. It's like my heart is telling the mistake, "I got you." It quiets the self-doubt in my brain.
 - d. Empathize with the mistake. What emotions are you feeling? If they are anger, frustration, or annoyance would it help you feel better about your mistake if you **wrecked** your project on purpose? Art has magical healing powers. It can help emotions move through you. Get out those frustrations if needed. Your creative well is endless. Ending one project might just mean you are giving yourself space to move on to the next best thing.
7. **Keep going.** Keep experimenting and playing for as long as you can or would like. Each time you make a mistake, apply a strategy.
 8. Reflect. You can choose how formally or informally to think about the activity. Here are some ideas:
 - a. Snap a photo of your work for later
 - b. Let your mind wander while you make dinner
 - c. Journal
 - d. Talk to a friend

Whatever your experience, I hope this exercise helped you see mistakes in a new light.