



# Neuberger Museum of Art

[neuberger.org](http://neuberger.org)

## Let's Create A Collage Using Found Materials

A project inspired by the Abstract Expressionist collage works of Anne Ryan

**"COLLAGE"** describes both the technique and the resulting work of art in which pieces of paper, fabric, images, and other materials are arranged and stuck onto a surface.

### Activity

In this *NEU To Do for Kids* project, young artists will create an abstract collage by combining small pieces of fabric and materials to form shapes and patterns that highlight different textures and colors.

### Materials

- Paper (computer paper or construction paper will work but bristol or cardboard will hold up best to the glue)
- Marker
- Pencil
- Liquid glue
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Found fabric (dish towels or old clothes such as jeans, shirts, and socks will work but make sure you have permission to use these items before cutting and gluing begins)
- Found materials (search for items that have different textures such as tin foil, plastic wrap, paper towel, cardboard, yarn, string, magazine cut outs of fabric, etc.)



This project was created by the Neuberger Museum of Art Education team.

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## Step 1: Select your paper

Are you going to use a white sheet of paper or maybe you want to use a colored construction paper or a heavier piece of cardboard?

*Parents: Consider cutting a cardboard box down to a smaller size for use.*

## Step 2: Scavenger hunt for fabric and materials.

Search for found fabric and materials that you can recycle to make into art. Get creative! Look for items that have different textures and finishes. Try to find things that are not on the material lists that you would like to include. This will make *your* collage unique.

## Step 3: Think about your color palette.

Here are some questions to get you thinking about color selection:

- Are you going to make a monochromatic collage that has only varieties of one color or are you going to make a collage that explores all colors?
- Are you going to use complementary colors?  
*Blue and Orange, Purple and Yellow, or Red and Green*
- Are you going to use cool colors?  
*Blues, greens, and purples*
- Are you going to use warm colors?  
*Oranges, yellows, and reds*

## Step 4: Draw shapes.

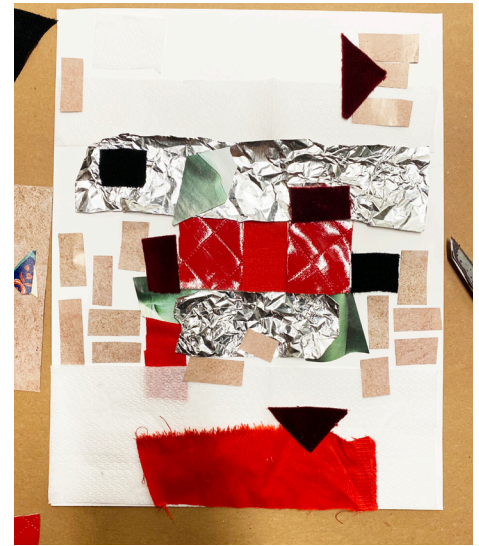
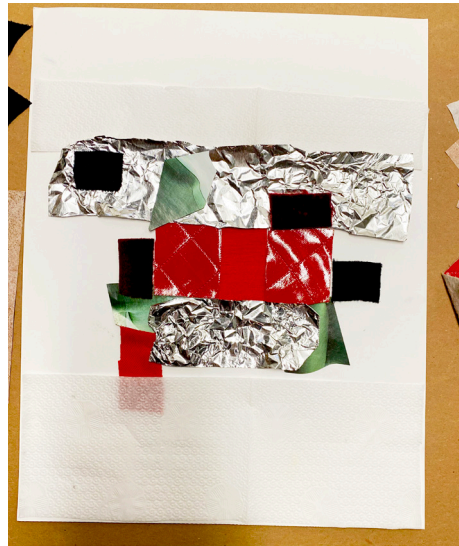
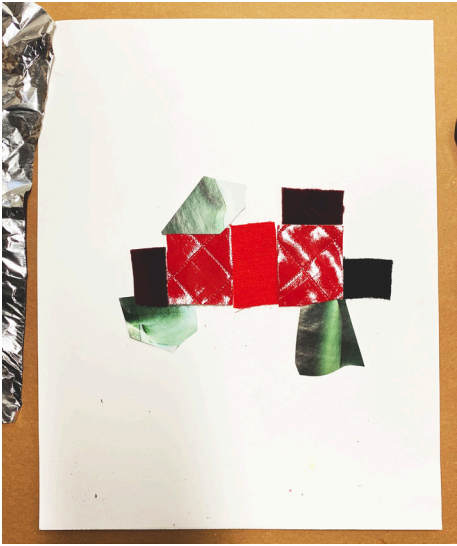
Begin to draw shapes with a marker, pencil and ruler onto your materials. Think about the different shapes you know: squares, rectangles, circles, triangles, diamonds, hexagons, octagons, and ovals. You can also create your own irregular organic shapes without using a ruler.

## Step 5: Cut shapes.

Cut your drawn shapes out of the material by following along the lines with your scissor. Take your time to get your edges how you would like them. Would you like them frayed or maybe a straight cut?







## Step 6: Arrange shapes.

Take your cut shapes and arrange them on your piece of paper.

## Step 7: Glue your collage.

Take your time to glue the pieces into the composition you have selected.

## Step 8: Take a photo and share!

We can't wait to see your creations!

Have a grownup post your photo to social media and be sure to tag #NEUtoDoKids.





**Anne Ryan** (1889-1954) was born in Hoboken, New Jersey in 1889. Ryan was a member of the artistic circle that flourished in New York City's Greenwich Village during the 1920s. She wrote poetry, made prints and paintings, and designed ballet costumes and stage scenery. Ryan is best known, however, for her collages of textiles and papers. She began creating collages in her late 50s. Even though she only created collages the last six years of her life, she managed to complete approximately 400 collages that were mostly small in scale. In her earliest collage work, Ryan included snippets of language or bits of discarded material with some recognizable text from a particular place. For example, she used sugar cube wrappers from a famous New York City restaurant in one of her collages. In later work, she stopped using found and discarded materials with text and took a more formal approach focusing on color, shape, texture and line.

Ryan collected a variety of fabrics—preferably fabrics that were worn, even tattered or frayed—and combined them with materials such as cardboard, foil, or cellophane. She made compositions that were filled with different textures: soft, hard, bumpy, smooth, crinkled, shiny, and matte. She sometimes used the handmade rag papers made by Douglass Howell as supports for her collages and ultimately incorporated them into her compositions.

Pictured to the right is an example of a Douglass Morse Howell rag paper that he would make from materials including flax, hemp, linen, and blue jeans found near his home in Long Island. Not one piece seems to resemble another.

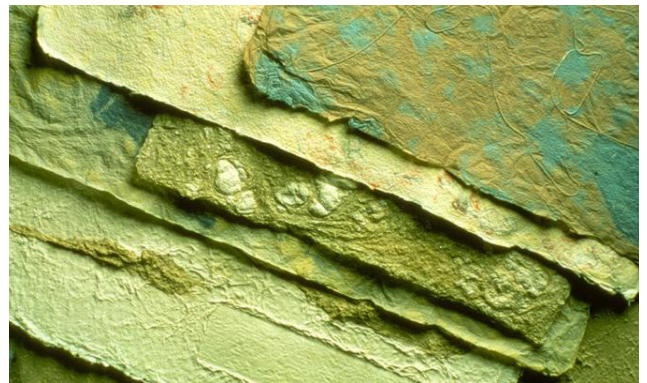


Image (above): Anne Ryan, ca. 1949. Anne Ryan papers, circa 1905-1970. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by William Pippin.