

## Keeping a Journal, a Diary for the Artist.

In art school we had to hand in our journal's at the end of the term and it ranked an extremely high percentage of our mark, which tells you just how important they are. For some reason many of us find it difficult to use them, my guess is our busy schedules get in the way and we tend to run out of time. So I thought I'd explain exactly what a journal can be first and then I'll give you the challenge:

**First: a journal can be anything** ... it can be as simple as your sketchbook; so if you are already using a pad of blank paper for intensely detailed or quick drawings, ideas for bigger projects, writing notes, exercises designed to heighten your skills and so on, then you are in fact journaling! It does not have to be anything fancy although there are many versions out there for creative journals. They can be of any size, but it is important to choose something you are going to be able to use on a daily basis, therefore do not pick anything cumbersome! I highly recommend the type with a coil binding, it is so much easier to draw on the inner pages because the coil allows for a flat surface to sketch or write on.

**Here's the challenge:** now that you know what a journal is and used for, if you don't already have one go out and purchase one suitable for you. If you like the more decorative kind so be it, there are many to buy out there OR why not 'decorate' it yourself. Collaging [magazine clippings or bits of your own paintings] is the perfect technique for creating a colourful and very personal cover. Once you've chosen the challenge is to do something with it '**EACH AND EVERY DAY**' ...it can be time spent decorating the cover [or any other pages you'd like to play with], it can be a few moments writing down an idea that pops into your head for a project. Take 5 minutes and do a blind contour [aka observational drawing where you don't look at the page] or any other type of exercise you like; just a simple sketch of your room or objects in front of you. Be as detailed or as free as you like [or have time for]! I know an artist who used her journal for quick sketches of the farm houses as she whisked by them in a car [and no she was not driving LOL] I've always been mesmerized at how she was able to capture so much with so little time! One of our greatest tasks as an artist is learning how to leave details out, I'd say that would be an excellent way to practise that concept! We all have weaknesses so use your journal to help you strengthen them. **Every Day Do Something, Anything!**

...by the way the above challenge will come due at our next meeting which at this point may not be until next year. Please stand by and check in regularly.