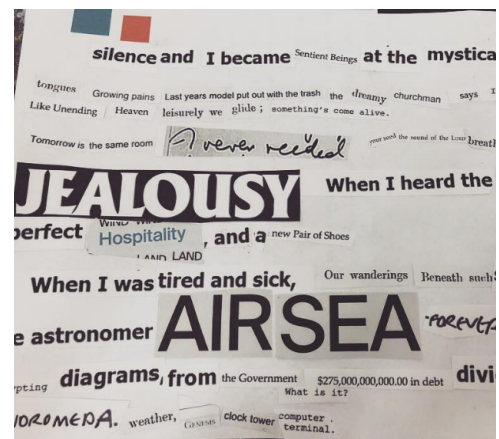


## Ways to Jumpstart Creativity

Gathering inspiration to get creative can be difficult! Sometimes we hit artist blocks, or find ourselves uncertain of how to spark new ideas. Below are some strategies and activities you can use if you ever find yourself stuck in a creative rut.

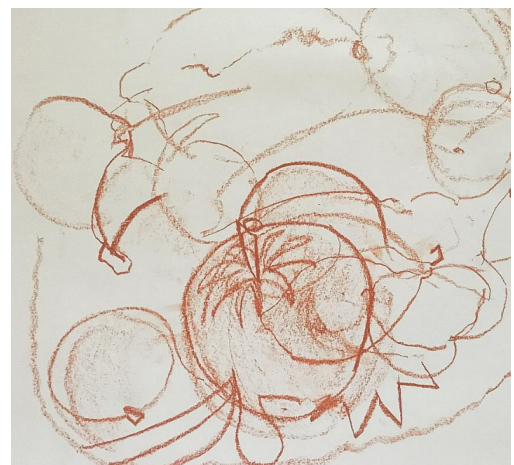
### 1. Cut-Ups

Cut-ups gained popularity during the 'Dada' art movement of the early twentieth century. The cut-up technique involves cutting up text on paper into short phrases and words. Usually, you try to get writing from as many diverse sources as possible – old magazines, books, internet pages, song lyrics, etc. You then can rearrange these texts as you see fit – or for extra fun, you can put them in a bowl and pull out pieces at random to create a poem. Often times, these poems and combinations won't make a lot of sense – but that's what's wonderful about them! They can spark new, and almost absurd ideas that inspire you to think outside the box. Popular musicians like David Bowie used this technique to write song lyrics.



### 2. Doodle Exercises

Some folks are intimidated to draw or sketch because they feel as though they aren't 'good' at it. However, sketches can be anything! Many artists use sketching as a tool for the process of creation, even if they don't draw as part of their main body of work. A warm-up technique many artists use is called 'blind contour drawing'. This involves



looking at any object of your choice, and tracing every part of its outline and surface without looking at your page, or taking your pencil off the paper. The purpose of this exercise is not to make a 'good' drawing – in fact, it will probably look pretty silly. The purpose of the exercise is to let your mind and your hands become more aware of the textures and changes in an object's form. These drawings are usually done very slowly, and are meant to encourage artists to examine aspects of their subjects in greater detail.

### **3. Explore Other Artists' Work**

When you look at the way other artists approach ideas and the creative process, it can help you see new ways of expressing your own creativity. Sometimes you'll come across a work of art that makes you think: "Wow, I never thought to try that!". There are free, online resources that you can use to explore countless works of art – Youtube and digital museum catalogues are a great place to start. If you can, try to attend artist talks hosted by local art organizations or galleries. These are wonderful opportunities to see artists give an in-person presentation about their own creative journeys.

### **4. Get Connected with Other Creatives**

There are many art-related clubs and groups in almost every community. Bouncing ideas off of other creative folks is a great way to get the ball rolling. It can also be rewarding to collaborate with other artists whose work lines up with your own. If you're not interested in joining an in-person group, there are many groups online on websites like Facebook where you can chat with other artists. These groups are a great way to ask questions, get advice on your projects, and get recommendations for resources and materials to try.

## **5. Music, Literature and Nature**

Many artists listen to music when they work. Some even make playlists specifically to help inspire them on certain projects. Sometimes you will hear a lyric or a rhythm that jumpstarts your mind into a place of creativity. Maybe you'll find a book and read a particular phrase that sticks with you and inspires you.

It can also be helpful to free your mind by moving your body throughout nature. Take a walk on a trail, or even just spend some time outside listening to the birds. Sometimes, when we least expect it, these moments of contemplation and movement can allow creative thoughts to form.

