

Casual Alchemy *Make Things* Section 2

11.9. 21

Introduction to the Various Aspects of Making

Many Ways of Thinking, Seeing, Learning, Doing

Distinguishing “making” from work, art,

The Buddha Board

Making as Play, using “Loose Parts”

Surrealism and Making

a few ways to start: *Stay Simple*: caps, twist ties, paper clips

Getting Right to it

The Territory of Making, *the lay of the land*

Consult your Memories of Tools, Materials, Making

A few dozen Prompts



Gallery of Makers/Made Objects

Review

hard/soft focus making *idyls and grave cards*

Getting Back to it

Other dimensions of Making

Review *Again*

Casual Alchemy *Make Things*

Explorations/Responses via Head, Hand, Heart 11.9.21



“Bidden or not bidden, the gods arrive.” in accident, disguise, chance, coincidence, events... alone, in pairs, triples or mobs... as friends, family, strangers; as feathers, leaves, sticks and stone; in emails, spider bites and trips to the store.

Making is a way to recognize, greet, cooperate with the gods; To honor the Ordinary. It is a fundamental non-verbal form of communication. Making likely preceded language. It connects into the brain along different paths than speaking or writing. It's a way to escape the velvet tyranny of words. Had Freud developed otherwise, we might today have “The Making Cure”. *Making* is sometimes confused with art. It's larger and more universal than that. It's closer to the what John Cage says: ***"Art is about self-alteration, not self-expression"***. Morse Peckham went a bit further, calling art-making the opportunity to practice coping with disorder. We make “art” to learn how to deal with the unsettling experiences of life, the inevitable wash of order and chaos

We all make Dinner, Time, Trouble

In times of Destruction, Create Something. Maxine Kingston

In times of Creation, Destroy Something. Anon

Why are we making? Why are we mattering?

For more skill at understanding, and maybe changing, Your Story;

Greater confidence with your personal aesthetic,

Better comfort with patience, solitude and practicing the “Good Enough”

Broader technical skills with common materials: Develop new Creative Practices and Tool kits_You produce a new collection of images and objects You encounter new ways of thinking, poems, and other expressions of meaning

Better skills to participate in cooperative activities. You discover Others who share your interests, curiosities and concerns

Experiences with ambiguity, chance, digression, accident and distraction as positive forces. Contact w Unseen non-exec function, non-institutional, Engage for experiences not outcomes/products

As a proto-political activity: To Bear Witness to ambiguity, non-duality

THE TERRITORY of MAKING

Making is simply creating patterns on materials, ordering and reordering stuff. Most basically, it's done by adding more to something or subtracting something, or a combination of the two. It can be done with tools or just your hands, outside, inside, anywhere, anytime. Two other things: It's important to ritualize making: have a place, a space and time. It can be a studio or workshop. It can be the kitchen table. And, it does not have to be Grand. See how little you can actually make something with and still have meaning.

ACTIONS of MATTERING *just a starter list*

Wandering	Noticing	Playing	Finding	Gleaning	Collecting
Arranging	Stacking	Storing	Sharing	Altering	Editing
Violating	Cutting	Heating	Coloring	Shedding	Marking
Boiling	Dyeing	Scratching	Piercing	Carving	Charring
Pounding	Shaping	Breaking	Sewing	Knitting	Defacing
Joining	Hiding	Binding	Bundling	Bending	Weaving
Drilling	Repairing	Fixing	Recycling	Gifting	Collage
Assemblage	Tearing	Re-Purposing	Emptying	Remembering	Filling

COMMON TOOLS/WAYS TO MAKE and JOIN THINGS

penknife	sandpaper	paper cutter	needle	clippers	string-yarn
drill	scissors	glue(s)	markers	saw	hammer
rasp	tape	pencil	stapler	pins	clamps
paper clips	rubber bands	twist ties			

COMMON MATERIALS and OBJECTS to consider

band aids	dental floss	camera	stirrers	feathers	cards
driftwood	butcher paper	buttons	bones	thumbprint	bark
charcoal	wax	ash	rusted objects	dirt	stones
black sand	old stamps	lint	spills/stains	envelope corners	
shells	flowers	fingernails	leaves	mesh bags	skeletal leaves
dust	egg cartons	sticks	fruit	bugs (<i>from window sill</i>)	
bits of mirror	small jars	coffee filters	water	Toe of Sock	

WAYS to Start: *Discovering your capacities as a maker*

Consider the things we make as tools, devices to see and explore and react to the world around us and extensions of who we are. There have always been many ways to be a Maker: homemaker, smitty, bricoleur, tinker, bodger. Do you *putz?* *futz?* *putter?* *diddle?* **Great!** Celts honored Makers as Seers, their objects healed us by making things that worked with the disturbing themes of life: balance-imbalance, center-off-center, beauty-violence. Made Objects are “amplifiers” of psyche, visible tangible messages of elusive truths. It is simply the putting patterns, order on ordinary materials.



Fast Start:

WANDER/BROWSE. Collect a few of the objects you cross paths with

MARK-MAKING

Use a Buddha Board

Make Marks on a piece of paper with ashes, flower petals, coffee stains; Draw some shapes around them What the Message, the Map?

OBJECT-MAKING Practice Haiku with materials.

Just three things joined together with wire, string or dental floss *Now-mood-contrast-* Choose something of the moment, something of nature, something of personal importance and combine in a way that reveals a contrast.

Empty Container. Get a jar, a box, a candy tin. Put something in it or on it.

Suggestion

Make several objects at once so no one becomes too important



Workshop Notes

Encounters for Exploring Self, Community and Nature with chance, coincidence, accident, Unconscious Intelligence. Recognize and hold an intention, concern, interest, person. Then, try these various approaches:

WHAT DID YOU DO AS A
CHILD THAT MADE THE
HOURS PASS LIKE MINUTES?
HEREIN LIES THE KEY TO
YOUR EARTHLY PURSUITS.
CARL JUNG

Allow Yourself to Be, to Feel SILLY

Look at these Videos: www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMQu3yVC7o www.youtube.com/watch?v=S16EGmoC14I

Light Trance Play Idyls!

Scrying Being with your reflection in a mirror

Derive Wandering, Noticing: *What's Here? Now?*

Loose Parts Just Play with sticks, stones, mache (egg and berry cartons)

Focussed Making Collage-Assemblage

Collect/Select on a block, a cd case, jar, slide sheet, a ketchup cup from Burger King

Marking on cards, caps, , dirt, inks, smoke, thumbprints,
Try pounding with fresh leaves, flowers, berries

Joining natural found materials using yarn, wire, string, thread, floss,
paper clips, rubber bands, twist ties

Carving With just a pocket knife carve onto a found stone or bark: whittling,
shaping, smoothing with sandpaper

Accident Use Scraps, Seasonals, Spills, Treat Stains as divinations.

Community Try *Exquisite Corpse* adding to the work of others on a Mural, Tree
Loom, Chain, Cards

Shedding re-purposing your collections/mementoes

REMEMBER: Keep it Casual! *How Little? How Fast?*

Ways of Making include cooking, bodywerk, exercise, gardening...

Keep a Personal Focus ReVisiting Biography *Make a Profile*

Collect images/words /markings of personal importance.

Put these on Cards, Masks, Caps, Accordion Books, onto sticks

After a while, you'll see patterns repeat, "suits", of the themes
in your life. *"Oh You Again!"*

Use a band aid, and see what that does in your Profile collage

MANY WAYS of MAKING

6 pages

AS COMPASSES, TOOLS, TECHNIQUES OF EXPLORATION

These few dozen prompts are meant to short circuit resistance and jump start the creative process. It is not a linear or progressive activity. You are looking for the Portal of the Moment. It is probably in this list somewhere. It will likely be a different one tomorrow. Your intuition will get drawn to one or some of these approaches more than others. That's the signal to go with. There's no one place to start. You have to be alert to changing opportunities to look behind the visible, the evident... at the borders, the folds, the cracks. We want to quiet The Critic, The Clock-Watcher, efficiency expert, the Product Developer, the Utilitarian. This is a chance to meet the reptile brain. Look over this collection of items like it's a menu in a local restaurant and you are hungry. *Stella Quote?*

1. Experiment with Attitude: See yourself as a Researcher. You are an experimenter. Your life is a laboratory.

Emphasize Organic language over Technical as feature of gods...

Assume that everyone you see, everywhere you go, everything you do is important... but you may not be aware of it. The stop at the fast food restaurant, the walk down the street, the passing of the mail man

Pay new attention to coincidence, accident, frustration, annoyance, ignorance, weather, anxieties, close calls, hunches and intuition.

This is a Non-"Project" Approach: non rational forms of Making, For a moment, ***You are out-of-service***, not concerned with art, career, pocketbook, resume



2. Identify Yourself

Look in top dresser drawers, desk drawers, glove compartments for those casually saved shards of your life to get revived, re-purposed in service of this adjusted story you are forging. These form the core of collages and assemblages. Start with a thumbprint or Band-Aid. Other doodles and connections might present These notes you are the seeds of the new story. These cards, after awhile, can create a “deck” that reflects who you’ve been. They may even sort into “suits”.

YOUR NAME Make a **new name** from an anagram of the letters in your name.

YOUR BODY? What part of your body seems most prominent?

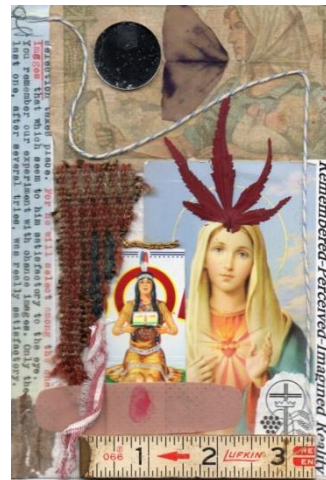
Do you have a movement with an arm or leg or hand? A special way of walking? Do you have a sound? What smells are you aware of, respond to. Do you have a smell? What are your lingering concerns, worries, diseases, complaints, addictions, discomforts *Dan's Ganglion Cyst Poem* What parts of your body make themselves most aware to you?

YOUR FAMILY? Are there physical family traits/ patterns of handling material; nose, your “walk. What are your family jokes, the sense of humor? For joy or anger?

What have you inherited? Story Themes: family ‘wisdom’..in stories, jokes, memories “we always” Tendencies, ways of seeing, “symptoms”... Ethnicity: Irish fatalism, Salvational, Resurrectional, stoned and crucified and risen... Misunderstood

Who says: “*never perfect enough*” or *Good Job*

Make poems and gifts to ancestors, relatives



3.Practice Selective Perceptions:

Spend 15 minutes just noticing the Shadows, Smells, Temperatures

Spend 15 minutes noticing how you breathe

Watch the same place for a few weeks. What changes

Dm Tree photos

4.Experiment with TIME

Have a long-term activity; *I try to keep a moss garden free from weeds!*

Try something to finish in just a few minutes

Work with the Time of Day, the Time of the Year

5. Experiment with Making Right NOW

Just put three things together in the next fifteen minutes what jumps into your hand? What's fallen lately? or blown near? Or seems out of place?

Using Gravity, Put 3 things together that can rest in the palm of your hand.

Using string or wire, Put 3 things together that can rest in the palm of your hand.



Desk Exercises: have five items on your desk and rearrange them often

Play with Loose Parts:

materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, taken apart, put back together in multiple ways. to empower a creative imagination. No defined use, change the shape or use of them. Be accessible physically, used them whenever and however they wish. Be regularly replenished, changed, added to. ***Allows fun, experiment, discover, and invent new things.*** loose parts is “open-ended.” explorations that occur naturally, not directed. Loose parts pave the way for personal, idiosyncratic critical thinking.

6. Experiment with Movement:

Make objects that shimmer, flicker, bob, twirl, flutter ***FENG SHUI:*** a Chinese proverb says that if you want to change your life, ***move 27 Things.*** What happens if you just change something's position, from outside to inside, up to down, shelf to floor? What happens if you change/shift size, materials, proportion, position, add motion, enlarge, miniaturize;

Play with ratio of order/disorder, geometry/free form, casual/formal

7. Experiment with ephemerals, transients, the fleeting:

rain, snow, ice, dawn, fog, smoke, twilight, liminal, leaking, something only glimpsed. effervescent, evanescent This can be done in the course of daily routines. raking leaves, bundling newspapers, shoveling snow...
Look at books by Andy Goldsworthy, Chris Drury, Nils Udo

8. Encounter the Exotic:

Learn about something *new*: ***Kuba Cloth, Mud Cloth, Ikebana, Bonsai***

9. *Make a Map* to Special local Places of beauty, antiquity, *Genii Loci*

10. *Wander* somewhere What do you experience

11. *Poetry* Read it. Write it. Read it out loud. Memorize it.

Try Haiku Try Paint Chip Poetry

Being that the crow is darker than its shadow

It understands much about shades of black

It is amused by the concept of “black or white”

For the crow, everything is always both.

13. *From that List of Ways to Matter/Make*, select a few of the more unusual ones (eg scratching...) and see where it takes you) Similarly, Choose a TOOL to start with and see what happens And then pick a Material

Explore Tools What is your personal history with tools? Are you “handy” What tools do you own, do you really like the feel of? Start making with just a few simple tools see what happens Maybe just a drills, an awl Make a tool.

Explore Materials Start with an empty container: cigar box, coffee can, candy tin, glass jar...where does it take you? Work with something fresh and moist, something hard and dry something brittle

Explore crafting techniques What can be said with plaiting, braiding, sewing, notching, gravity, lashing, pleaching, stacking, arranging gluing, welding, soldering, drilling, wedging The grammar of combined techniques is dazzling! Each evokes or resonates with each of us personally and then has a larger cultural meaning. But essentially crafting is about joinery... to join *re-ligare* Latin To bind back **religion**.

Intuitive Carving Get a small stone; With a pocket knife a nail or emery board scratch and carve on it; With sandpaper, smooth some or all of it.

15. *Fix Something* Accentuate the repair; The fix more precious

16. *Make “Smalls”*: How little of something is needed to make meaning? HOMEOPATHIC: dreamcatchers, willow fetishes, bark frame, bark box, peach pit carvings, origami, whirligigs, willow whistles, whimmy diddles

17. Matter Emotions... Look at the list of feelings and emotions pick a few and make things that convey those feelings. Use symbols, stones, sticks, paper, movement, color, sound.

18. Make a few Imaginal Cards:

They are small casual collages 2 ½" x 3 ½"

Find or make several playing card size blanks.

Maybe just use an old deck of cards

Marking: with dirt, ink, charcoal, the Smoke of a Candle, spilled coffee

Pounding the colors of fresh leaves or flowers

Collage Get some glue, tape or a stapler, a pen, crayon, marker, lipstick

Rubbing of Place. On bricks, cement

Look outside to see what you might use. Look in your desk or dresser drawer. Rip something from a newspaper or magazine Maybe add a small band aid or a fingerprint. to start to tell some Story, some truth about nature and human nature.



Learn More: www.danielmack.com/DMcards_000.html

Just Carry a 2 x 3 Card and see what you put on it

19. Memorials make something that helps you remember a person or event *Grave Cards*

21. The Baton/Wand Start with a Stick, shape it, add to it. What's it turning into? *Give it away*

22 Experiment with ambiguity

see list of Pairings

Make something that means a few different things;

Try to hold opposites together. *Don't they really belong together?*

23 Make Things With Others

FIND Ways, Places, People TO PRACTICE and MODEL over and Over...

Watch other people; Learn from them

24. Experiment with Sharing and Giving

Potluck model: What can you bring TO this? Story: Trish dream catchers

Share your making with children in school: have the pleasure and distress of engaging 20 or 30 children in something you are passionate about.

Make Gifts for your self: even the unrecognized s'elf,

25 Select a special object and tell others why it is special

27. Watch Children Play *Play with the* in a dirt kitchen,
Learn about Loose Parts

FIRST REVIEW *Questions after a Round of Making*

Consult your Reactions? Were you Surprised? Delighted? Uncomfortable?
What do these reactions tell you?

Look for Patterns in your Materials and Making major currents, themes, stories, myths, colors shapes, sizes. Are you repeating familiar ways of making in your choice of materials, size, complexity, need for help?

Does your work create dialogue and interaction with people?
or distinguish and separate you from others?

WHY are we doing this? *Remind me, again, please*
to see and reveal the less visible; to hear and speak the less spoken
Art/Spirit travels accidentally, at a glance This is called “flow”

Who Visited you while you were making? *Who dropped in to admire, to comment, to judge?*

How does this making connect you to your father? your mother?
your older s'elves? to your deferred s'elves? your other s'elves?

All objects are magic decoys. Who or what are you trying to attract (or repel) with what you've made? ***What else are you making?*** objects ALSO doorways, windows, bridges, coffins.

Start Again!...This is a Practice. *the Tide come in and out twice a day. It's never and yet always the same*

Surrealist Ways to Making as a spiritual practice

Automatic drawing/writing, deep breath, clear mind, see where the pencil goes

Calligramme words or letters of a text create a related shape

Cut-up text randomly cut up a text and reassemble in a new way

Collage combining found and created images, text and objects

Photomontage cut up and reassemble photographs

Cubomania: cut an image into squares and randomly reassemble

Étrécissements carefully cutting away of parts of images

Involuntary or Intuitive sculpture casually reworking a common material:

egg carton, paperclip, candy wrapper, twist tie, etc

Coulage pouring molten liquid (metal, wax, chocolate) into cold water. The results can be "read" as the divination technique of ***ceromancy***

Exquisite corpse: words, images, drawings, collage assembled by a group each unaware of what the others have done. The project is carefully folded or concealed to hide the works of others, revealing just an edge

Time Travelers' Potlatch players describe a gift to give to a historical person

Frappage flowers or leaves pounded onto paper to create colors and shapes.

Parsemage dust from charcoal/chalk scattered on the surface of water and skimmed off by passing a stiff paper or cardboard just under the water's surface ...similar to marbling with inks or oils

Frottage "rubbing" over a textured surface and adding to it

Fumage the smoke of a candle marks a paper or canvas.

Bulletism ink is shot at a blank paper and images are developed

Aerography Spray paint a 3-dimensional object as a stencil

Drippography dripping a flow of a liquid on paper or canvas

Paranoiac-critical method the artist invoking a paranoid state (*fear that the self is being manipulated, targeted or controlled by others*). result is a deconstruction of the psychological concept of identity, such that subjectivity becomes the primary aspect of the artwork.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealist_techniques

Intuitive Making

Notes from a Workshop

encounters in hunting and gathering consciousness; way stations where you can get reminded of your capacities as a Maker: the birthright activity of all humans. A browsing, grazing activity with found materials *We know how to do things, make things. It's hard-wired into us.*

- *emphasizes intention and practice* over access to the “right” tools or materials.
- *Bring a knife, look through www.danielmack.com, and bring something to share.*

Elements of Intuitive Making

Human nature loves heartily well-balanced irregularity and longs for it in life, in character. Calvert Vaux

= linear and non-linear Geometry + Krafting + Natural Materials,

= *affinity of opposites*: geometry/nature, order/chaos, mater/pater, understructure/overstructure,

= The Need, the Intention, The Hunt, Making, Moving Along. *Spiral approach to revisit refresh*

= simple understructure + interesting feature, a copy, interpretation, homage of something else.

= **an attitude, a mirror, a window into** our themes, Needs, mortality, transience

Intuitive Making Activities: cards, carving, assemblage, arrangements, gifts

Woods Walks, Watching people Looking at images/books Collecting Materials, Land-Based play Haiku/Senru Poetry, *Mud* Drawing Dancing with Sticks Make “Smalls”/Utensils Make/Give Gifts Make Kinetics Mache Objects Collaborate, Assist, Be Assisted Surrealist/Alchemical Exercises in Accident, Coincidence, Dissolving-Coagulating

***Our Needs?** for **Wonder** (awe, mystery, “feeling in”) for **Dexterity** (transforming, hand-spirit, Infinite Play), for **Stories** (how you fit into the world), for the **Organic/Sensual/Feral/Carnal**, Risk, Danger,*

Visitors? to be alert for:

***Your family:** who visits you ?? Who are you Building What For? Why?*

***Moods:** frustration, slow, fast, Memorable Encounters with people,*

***Inferiores:** the rest of the clan, the gremlins, the preferred, deferred, denied s’elfs,*

In Dreams Coincidences, Accidents

Encounters with The Elements:** fire, earth, water, air, moon, rain, cold, sweat, sun, smell, noise, movement **What Animals, Birds, Insects, Afflictions?