

A GUIDE FOR UNDERSTANDING A PERSONAL COLLAGE

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THE PURPOSE OF BUILDING A COLLAGE

The purpose of building a collage is to access imagery from the unconscious. Imagine a sheet of black paper that represents a stage...quiet...empty...waiting. It has invited the characters of the unconscious to come forth from darkness and the unknown into the light of a stage. Try to accept the assumption that this imagery is personally relevant for self awareness, such as imagery from a dream is considered personally relevant for self understanding, In our case, these images are also relevant for art-making.

ASSUMPTIONS

Assumption I: Images from the unconscious, even though apparently chosen at random, have personal meaning.

Assumption II: Random placement of these images on a sheet of paper also has personal meaning.

WORKSHEET FOR UNDERSTANDING A PERSONAL COLLAGE

CONSTRUCTION

- 1- Worksheet may be approximately 16"x24"...placed vertically or horizontally.
- 2- Images are selected from magazines and may be cut out, torn or both.
- 3- Images may be glued or taped, but it is suggested they be done so lightly so that they may be moved about or removed easily.

BALANCE OF IMAGE SELECTION

Notice the balance of the images of the four elements: Water, Earth, Air and Fire.

WATER may represent the unconscious and emotions. Is it clean and clear, moving or stagnant, polluted, deep, or shallow, Frozen, flowing or standing still.

EARTH may represent nature, animals, material reality and human beings.

AIR is represented by sky, clouds, space and insinuates spirit and free flowing breath.

FIRE can be an image of actual fire, burning brightly or smoldering. It may be represented in another image that is the color of red, usually represents expression of feelings and creative activity, Images that are actually red indicate that which wants to be energized.

Noticing the balance or imbalance of the elements can serve as a guide to what element is over-emphasized or what is missing and could be sought out and included.

MEANING OF CERTAIN IMAGES

Black and white images can indicate ideas that have not yet come to into the present.

Lack of color can represent that which is past, not here and now, like a ghost that is no longer relevant.

Cartoons and drawings are like ideas waiting to be taken seriously or can have hidden meanings.

Words are like exclamation marks...or in overabundance, are more about intellect than feeling.

PATTERN OF IMAGES

Generally, the collage progresses from left to right...past to future, and from top to bottom, conscious to unconscious.

Images in the center represent the Self...as how one is seeing oneself at the time.

Images at the center top represent an ideal, what one is striving for.

Images at the top left indicate dreams, ideas (which lead to the ideals at the top center).

Top right images indicate one's mission (which comes out of one's ideals).

Center bottom represent that which we are having difficulty with..literally "holding down".

The bottom left corner is considered the "Creative Wellspring" which has images that are deep in the unconscious and want to be expressed creatively.

Bottom right corner represents a direction our energy is being directed.

PROGRESSING THE COLLAGE

Collages represent a moment in time from which the unconscious expresses itself and then moves quickly. It's important to let it do so...in order to encourage growth and change.

Therefore, "Progressing the collage" can be a tool for activating the understanding that can come from this reflection.

METHOD: On a fresh worksheet, select just one image that most wants to be further known and understood and place it on it's own stage, in the center. of the worksheet. Select two or three more images from the first collage that are most supportive of this image, setting the first collage aside, giving this new collage an opportunity to become more known.

UTILIZING THE COLLAGE FOR ART-MAKING

In our work of art-making, create a maquette of these new images in clay. ...staying true to how the image actually is, without elaboration, in order to understand the image with as little personal projection as possible.

Try to listen to the knowledge that can come forth during this process. Repeat the maquette, but up the scale and allow intuition to give more personal feeling. Eventually this process will lead to a sculpture that stems from one's own personal meaning.

This method, using the collages while creating a sculpture, can be very useful for problem-solving while creating. I refer to my collages as one would refer to one's notes while writing a paper or engaging in a complex project.

Often, the collage is actually a map for the making of a sculpture. The collage informs the process.

FINAL ASSUMPTIONS

Assumption I: Something within the unconscious has come forth and resolved itself through the manifestation of art-making.

Assumption II: Images from the lower left corner are especially rich resources for art-making.

Assumption III: The "progressed collage" is a useful tool for informing and problem-solving the process of creating a sculpture.