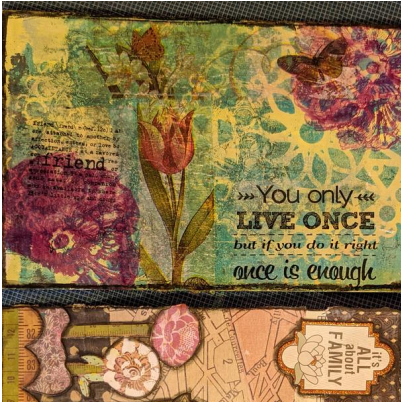


# COMMON WEAL COMMUNITY ARTS

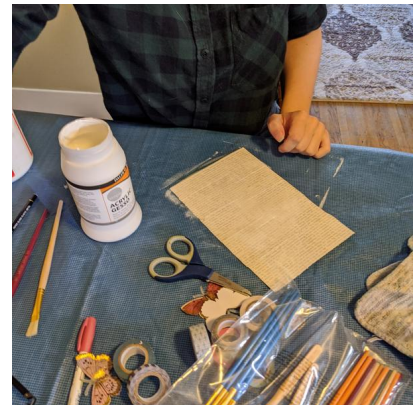
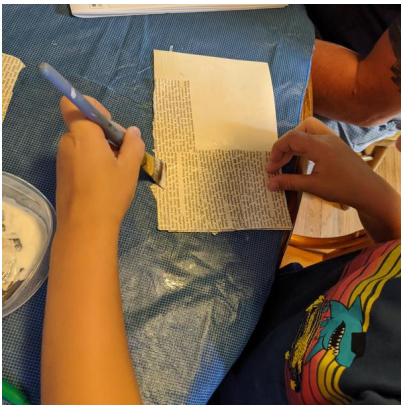
# Artful Isolation Activities

## Week Twenty: Mailable Art



**Amy Vandermeulen** is a member of Pheasant Rump Nakota Nation, currently residing in Regina. Amy has been working with art journaling for 10 years and recently turned her artistic focus to collage art. Her work aims to explore complex themes such as the environment and daily mental health therapy by repurposing vintage imagery.

**This activity is possible thanks to a partnership with the Heritage Community Association in Regina, Saskatchewan.**



**Connect with loved ones at a distance through visual artistic expression!**

**What is Mailable Art?** Mailable (or Mail Art) is a holistic global artistic movement that emerged in the 1960s. It's centered on sending small scale works through the postal service. Materials commonly used include postcards, paper, found or recycled images and objects, rubber stamps, and paint, but can also include music, sound art, poetry, or anything that can be put in an envelope and sent via postal mail.

**Why Mailable Art?** In today's society, when people often spend their days in front of screens, personal connections with loved ones (those that live far away and those just down the street), has an increasing importance. When we look for these opportunities, we see there are so many ways to connect: we can utilize penpal systems to make new personal connections, artists can connect with one another through the mail, the options are limitless. In Amy's words, "mail art generally operates within a spirit of anything goes."

**Suitable For:** All Ages (note that wee ones will need support).

**What You'll Need:** An envelope and stamp, sturdy paper or small canvas board, postcards, paint and paint brushes, glue or modge podge, designed papers or magazine images (for collage), markers, crayons, or pencil crayons, stamps and ink pads, and embellishments such as ribbons, lace, buttons, paperclips, string, yarn, and stickers. The possibilities are endless! Amy also repurposes recyclables such as coffee filters and newsprint.

### Getting Ready:

- Consider who you'd like to connect with. Has it been awhile since the people in your life received anything from you in the mail? Is there someone you know who is feeling isolated or lonely? Make a list of the people you'd like to send a piece of your authentic artwork to and source their addresses if you don't have them already.
- Think about the people on your list and brainstorm personalized inspiration for your mailable art. What special memories do you have with the person you're creating for? Are there particular moments you'd like to focus on, such as visiting a farm in the summer as a child?
- You may choose to do this activity alone, or coordinate with a group of friends or family. Would you like to surprise someone special or coordinate a large scale exchange?



### Activity:

- Choose an envelope and substrate (an underlying or foundational layer, typically sturdy enough to support your work), making sure the artwork will fit into the envelope once it's finished. Amy chose to use blank wedding invites as her substrate, writing a letter on one side before starting the art process on the other.
- If you're focusing on collage, gather your supplies and take your time arranging them on your substrate. Once you're happy with how your project looks, start the gluing process. Make sure you let this first layer dry before moving on to the next step.
- If you're focusing on drawing or painting, use Gesso or white acrylic as your base or primer. Let your base dry while you plan your image, gathering the colors you'd like to use. Consider what you want to represent. Is it true to life or abstract? Are you focused on accurate representation, an exploration of colour, or something else entirely? Let your creativity guide you!
- Once your drawing, painting, or collage is dry you may want to add embellishments. This can bring a bit of whimsy to your piece, but the choice is entirely up to you!
- Let your piece fully dry overnight before putting into your envelope, so it doesn't stick to the inside. Add a stamp and drop it off at your local mailbox.

### Reflection:

- Think about how you sourced materials. Were you able to use recycled items such as old newsprint, magazines, cereal boxes, etc.? Next time, challenge yourself to use only recyclables to create your mailable art.
- Think about how you put your materials together. What did you focus on? Colour? Texture? Imagery? Could you create a series of mailable art work using your focus as inspiration?
- Take a picture of your mailable art and share it with us on Facebook or Instagram by tagging **@skcommonweal** and using the hashtags **#cwsnailmail** and **#cwneighbours**