

ALTERED POSTCARDS

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Project Description:

Altered Postcards are a unique mixed media twist on your traditional 'snail mail'. Using a new or vintage postcard, the project takes you through various mixed media layering techniques to revamp the traditional message space found on the back of the card. Using collage, acrylic paint, and oil pastel, this step-by-step allows you to create a small area of abstract art. The postcards are then finished with details in pen, or a handwritten quote. These cards are rad to mail to a friend or can be repurposed in a future collage or mixed media project!

Materials Needed:

- Postcard(s), can be new or vintage
- Matte gel medium
- Acrylic paint in variety of colors
- Small paintbrushes for paint, and another paintbrush dedicated to your gel medium
- Oil pastels
- An old gift card or credit card
- Small sized ephemera (paper scraps, magazine cut outs, etc.)
- Scissors
- Matte liquid varnish
- Gel pens for detailing
- Black detail pen (pitt pen, stabilo pen, etc.)
- *Optional: white gesso (if adding a quote)
- *Optional: wax paper (in the case your postcard warps and you need to flatten it under a book)

Instructions:

- 1.) Select a postcard you're going to alter - your postcard can be new or vintage.
- 2.) Begin by adhering pieces of ephemera to the back of the card where you would traditionally write a message. Your ephemera could include pieces of scrapbook paper, leftover or found paper bits, or magazine cut outs. Using a paintbrush, adhere your ephemera down with gel medium. Try to fill up the entire message space, as this will give you more to work with once we begin adding paint and other media. Your postcard may warp a bit as you add the gel medium – but don't worry! Let it dry for a few minutes, then sandwich it between some wax paper and underneath a heavy book to help flatten it out a bit. This will of course vary based on the general thickness of the postcard you're working on.
- 3.) Add some acrylic paint on top of your ephemera using a small paintbrush. Your paint can be applied in blocks of color, splatters, patterns, or drips. If you plan on mailing your postcard, it's at this same time that you can add a block of color to the address side of your card. This will add a little more pop of color for when you go to address it, and help the card look overall like a finished piece.
- 4.) Once your paint is dry, apply oil pastel using three different techniques:
 - a.) Draw on as a scribble, similar to a crayon, to achieve some primitive and abstract detailing.
 - b.) Apply as a block of color underneath where you have applied some paint. This will help create some interesting texture, and bring more attention to where you've already put some color down.
 - c.) Apply as a thick block on top of your paint or ephemera - then using an old credit or gift card, scrape into the oil pastel to create pattern or texture. Whatever color or ephemera you might have underneath may also peek through!
- 5.) Using your matte liquid varnish, you will then seal your oil pastel to prevent smearing and crumbling. Simply apply by putting a few drops onto your postcard and spreading with a paintbrush. You don't need a lot of the varnish – so just one or two drops will do! Be sure your postcard is completely dry before moving onto the final step. If you experience any warping again, allow it to dry and sandwich it between some wax paper and a heavy book.
- 6.) Add final touches to your altered postcard using gel pens or a black detail pen. Draw dots, outlines, patterns, or scribbles. An optional finishing touch: paint a small rectangle or stripe with white gesso on top of your layers. Once dry, you can write a quote or phrase on top of the gesso area using a black pen. If you wanted to add your own tiny illustrations or painted details – now would also be the time to do so!

For more information visit: www.bybun.com

