

SKETCHBOOK ADVENTURES

Prompt 8: Put it together – Meditating on pattern

In the snowless winters of my Southern California childhood, the season was signaled by my mother sweeping the piles of invoices from her housecleaning business and overdue utility bills off our kitchen table and into a box so she could set up her sewing machine to make holiday gifts. All the bits and parts that would turn into actual things surrounded her, filling every inch of the table — the red tomato pin cushion, lace trims and metallic braided cording in shoe boxes, piles of fabric, old jam jars stuffed tight with seam rippers, scissors and pencils.

The rest of our condo was immaculate. The kitchen table was the only spot where disorder was allowed to rest. My mother was constantly doing, constantly making. In December, it was always sachets filled with perfumed dried flowers, gifts for the women whose houses she cleaned, her friends, the checker at the grocery store, my teachers and pretty much anyone else we knew or had ever met. In October, sequins, glitter and sparkly gold and black fabric were magically transformed into Halloween costumes. It wasn't just at the holidays, though. She always seemed to be working on a sewing project, letting the hems out of my skirts or dresses or making DIY scrunchies for my hair. One the projects that took her the longest was a quilt she created from all the scraps leftover from other projects. None of the patterns or colors seemed to go together. She mixed bright fluorescent florals with earth-toned stripes and pastel polka dots but somehow when the quilt was finished it was perfect and it seemed as if all the colors and patterns were meant to be together.

This prompt is inspired by that quilt that my mother sewed, which is still my favorite blanket in the world. Although my mom choose to mix up colors and patterns, in the examples I limited myself to a color palette but was totally free in pattern and image choices. For this prompt, grab a few magazines, a pair of scissors and glue stick then start looking at the images, patterns and colors in the magazines and ripping stuff out. You can decide on a color palette before you start or let what you find influence you or do what my mom did with her quilt and not let color or pattern constrain you. It's totally up to you! Once you have a large selection of images to use, grab the first one and cut it into a square or rectangle shape and glue it onto your page. Repeat that for all the other pieces you ripped from the magazines until your page is full. Feel free to add other elements like the hand lettered quote I used in the second example.



