TIPS ON COLLAGE MAKING

First collect a large selection of materials. I hardly ever throw away a printed piece of archival paper. My collages, even the quilts, are mostly created from remnants of my printmaking projects, or printed media ephemera that pass into my life somehow, or from something I create especially for the project. I have drawers/folders of stuff marked by color or subject and I go searching for the right stuff. I give myself compositional choices by drawing. Even if it’s a few 8 min. sketches, I put them on paper to see which idea most realizes that vision in my head.

Create a variety of shapes, sizes and edges. Cut or tear, then arrange on your surface. Keep moving them around to find a pleasing solution. Your first idea may not always be the best. Think about it, don’t be afraid to change something or start over. When you find the best composition …walk away. Come back in two hours or the next day with a fresh pair of eyes and see if it still works.

Pay attention to edges. Because I usually use thick archival paper, I always paint the edges of collage shapes so I don’t get a white line between colors when I glue. Perhaps modify an edge to work with an image or pattern on the piece it will overlap. Collage should not be a quick cut, glue, and slap it down medium.

When your ready, use archival glue, adjust the viscosity to the paper, don’t over glue and be neat…no one wants to see blobs and smudges. Have damp cloth at the ready. Be patient, don’t try and glue everything at once. Use a clean paper over the glue area and rub gently toward the edges to remove air bubbles. Then press harder to seal the edges. No flappers in the wind. Always dry under a weight.

Last, mat your collage with a white or neutral color in a simple frame; don’t use color mats that match a color in your collage. You want your composition to be the star, not the mat or frame.