



Artist's Talk for the Colleagues of  
Calligraphy—November 18, 2017

Roz Stendahl

## Be in the Moment: Visual Journaling as a Daily Practice

In my talk with your group today I will be focusing on the importance of daily practice. The visual journal which is fluid enough to incorporate words and visual elements, is an ideal tool to approach daily practice and create a balance between the elements of play and skill development that make a strong practice.

My talks are always centered around my work and different groups have different questions, but the following book titles and blog posts will be useful to most.

### Books Containing My Work

I've been fortunate to be included in a wide variety of books and publications relating to art and visual journaling. I think the most applicable to this audience includes the following.

*Creative License*, *An Illustrated Life*, and *An Illustrated Journey*, all of which are written by Danny Gregory and widely available in bookstores and via the internet.

The second and third of those titles are of interest because they look at the work of several artists all discussing their tools and working methods. That will be inspiring for many of you.

### Roz's Writings on Related Topics

I am a prolific blog writer. In order to stay in touch with students I started my blog RozWoundUp.com in the fall of 2008. For the first year I wrote daily, then after about 18 months I started to write about three times a week. There are over 2200 blog posts detailing my thoughts on visual journaling, wonder, and living the creative life.

If you are interested in any of the topics raised in today's talk I recommend that you visit RozWoundUp.com and use the search engine found on any page of the blog to look up the topic/key words you're interested in.

In addition, on any page of the blog, the top of the page navigation bar has several categories that will make it easy to find important parts of my archive.

If you hold on "Book Arts" a pop-up menu appears and the first item in that list is my **Pre-2008 Book Arts Gallery**. Click on that and you'll be taken to my old website which was created before I started my blog. In that section you will see book arts projects of the type I have shown in various book arts shows.

Also in the navigation bar on any page of my blog, if you hover over "Visual Journaling" several listings will appear. "Daily Dots" is in that list. There you'll find excerpts of what started as a daily drawing project—daily drawings of my Alaskan Malamute bitch Dottie.

Also under the "Visual Journaling" heading in the navigation bar you'll find the last item in that list is "Journals 1998-2008." Click on that link and you will find over 50 excerpts from various journals that you can scroll through to see how I use composition, color, negative space, text, and images, to create my pages.

This archive was started before I had a blog as a means to show work to students. Please refer to the blog for current work.

I encourage you to explore the rest of the headings in the navigation bar. Each has many useful posts or collections gathered beneath it. "Essentials" will give you links to the types of brushes I use, a compendium of my favorite gouache posts, and links to books on bookbinding and on color theory. All useful stuff quickly located.

On any blog page you will also find a category list on the right-hand side of the blog and there you can look up categories.

You might further enjoy my YouTube Channel (Roz Stendahl) where you'll find short videos discussing tips and video flip throughs of various journals like my International Fake Journal Month Journals, State Fair Journals, and various themed journals.

### Internal Critic

In most talks I touch on the internal critic. I find that in the 30 plus years that I've been teaching the number one obstacle students face to living a creative life is an over active and intrusive Internal Critic. This is easily recognized as a voice or idea in your head which tells you that you are not creative, talented, etc. It may take many forms, sometimes mimicking the voice and words of a negative parent or teacher.

Until you free yourself from this type of internal dialog, which eats at you and eats up your time, you aren't able to experience the full range of creative play from which resonant work flows.

If for some reason we don't address the internal critic in my talk, feel free to ask me questions about this during the question period. You want to recognize it and evict it!

One of the best books written on this phenomenon is Steven Pressfield's, *The War of Art*. He uses the label "Resistance." Another writer who has useful things to say on Internal Critic is Natalie Goldberg.

It is no coincidence that any writer you read on the subject of combating the Internal Critic will stress the important of the daily habit. You need to show up and do your work, so that the muse can find you, as the saying goes.

When you show up every day the issue of recognizing good ideas, as well as execution all become easier because of the daily work sessions. And the “editing” and refining of ideas also becomes easier because you have a volume of work to look at and tend to look at each piece as less precious as you work to build a unified whole—whether within one piece or between many pieces being readied for a show.

## Materials that I Use

I get frequent questions on my favorite tools and media. I refer you to my blog for very detailed reviews of everything I use. Here is an overview list of the things I always have with me:

*Water Resistant Pens for Sketching (I sketch directly with pen 99.9 percent of the time)*

Staedtler Pigment Liners in a .1, .3, .7; also small calligraphy tip.

Pentel Pigment Brush Pen

Sakura Pigma Professional Pen (FB)

Faber-Castell Pitt Calligraphy Pen (Black)

Tomboy Calligraphy Pen (Hard)

Pentel Aquash Brush Pen Filled with Light Black Ink

Sakura Pigma Sensei (in various sizes)

Pilot Lettering Pen (has a calligraphy tip)

Platinum Carbon Black Ink's Fine Tip Fountain Pen and their ink cartridges (I also have a felt tip marker that takes the same ink cartridges)

Sharpie WATER-BASED Paint Pen in White (fine tip)

Montana Markers 15mm wide tip (Typically one or two light colors)

Uniball Vision Elite with black-red ink

*Watersoluble Ink Pens (These include dye-based inks which are not lightfast and will fade even when not exposed to the light—scan work immediately and treat the digital as the original.)*

Pentel Color Brush (Black, sometimes Magenta)

Tomboy Dual Tipped Brush Pen (Various shades of gray)

The Pilot Parallel Pen (with red, violet, or black dye-based ink cartridges)

## Paints I Carry Daily

Two small Richeson Palettes, one with gouache, one with watercolor. See my blog “Travel Palettes” to see and read more about these. I always have these with me unless I’m going on a longer day trip or painting session (like to the zoo). If that’s the case I will carry a larger palette containing standard half pans. I use Daniel Smith Tube watercolors and Schmincke Pan watercolors. I use Schmincke Gouache (available only in tubes, I fill my own pans).

Sometimes I will carry my larger paint range in a Whiskey Painter’s Palette, or one of the Schmincke Pan Palette boxes I have. Use those key words in my blog’s search engine to discover all you need to know about how I choose colors and how I adapt boxes to carry more paints, and more.

To use paints in the field I use the Niji Waterbrush in rounds or in their flat version; and I also use the Pentel range of waterbrushes. I have been underwhelmed with all other brands.

I sometimes put liquid watercolor (Dr.Ph Martins Hydrus Fine Art Watercolors) in an empty Niji Waterbrush for sketching in color. You might also use a syringe to fill cartridges with this watercolor in the parallel pens, for your calligraphy.

Recently at the 2017 MN State Fair I experimented with a monopod “desk” that can hold palette, brush holder and sketchbook. This allows me to stand and sketch while using real brushes and a jar of water. We’re in phase two of designing this platform out of stiffer lightweight material, so that I can continue to stand and sketch—but use real brushes.

## Materials That I Use Mostly in the Studio

Neocolor II

Stabilo Tones (Defunct, now a limited range available as the Stabilo Woody.)

Uni Posca Pens (variety of colors and nib sizes)

Color Pencils (I used to work a lot with color pencils but find them cumbersome to carry.)

Rubber Stamps (I can’t recommend a stamp ink right now as I’m searching for a replacement. I used Brilliance brand for a decade, but 2 years ago they put fragrance in the ink. I can’t use it now and haven’t found a pigment stamp ink that doesn’t smell too strongly for me.)

Stencils

Gelli Arts Printing Plate (Tons of posts on this!)

Collage (My go to glue was UHU Purple, but this has been discontinued and I’m still testing other glues for stick, durability, and odor.)

Digital printing (Altering my art and sketches in Photoshop or Illustrator and printing them out and incorporating them into journal pages.)

Golden Acrylics and Media

## My Journal

I enjoy binding books that are suitable for use with all the media I use in my practice.

While primarily I sketch in pen and then add watercolor I will sometimes work with color pencil, gouache, or other materials. (I will even use heavy /thick impasto media in certain types of bindings that will accommodate that).

The paper I use in my handbound books needs to accommodate these usages. I therefore have a huge range of



papers (listed on the blog) which are typically printmaking or watercolor papers.

But I will also use drawing papers and other papers not sized for watercolor because I like characteristics of the paper and don't mind adapting my painting methods to a given paper.

I also test and review commercially bound journals and the papers they contain. I do this primarily because there will come a time when I can't bind any more and I want to know what's out there.

Students always ask me what size journal they should use. I've written several posts on this on my blog and recommend you read them. It's a personal thing that you have to arrive at through diligent practice! Certain tools will seem right to your hand at a certain scale on a certain size of page, other media will require a different size page. Or you might like everything uniform. Try several approaches.

In general because of physical constraints (shoulder issues) it's necessary for me to carry as little as possible. I tend to carry a fanny pack, all my regular tools and a journal that is **8 x 8 inches square or smaller**. I use larger journals for special occasions and in the studio.

Many people are surprised that I index my journals. I do this so I can find notes on new book structures I'm developing, notes for painting series, and general notes like meeting notes, but I also use the index to find past sketches and studies of work that I want to develop further. My journal is really the workbook of my creative life. You can read about how I index my journals on my blog under the navigation bar "Visual Journaling." There you'll find a heading "Indexing My Journals."

## How to Take a Class with Roz

Currently I am not able to schedule live classes because of elder care commitments (frequent hospitalizations for my in-laws makes it disruptive to plan live classes.)

Several of my classes are available on-line, with more being added as often as I can.

These classes contain hours of video lecture and demonstration as well as handouts and memos to direct students. Additionally I'm available for questions within the classroom.

The following classes are available on-line and are found under the navigation bar heading "Classes."

**By Design: Creating the Intentional Page** This is an on-demand class that can be joined any time. I consider it an essential foundational class. It deals with page design and composition as it relates to visual journaling and typeset pages. It also includes sections on creating book projects (artists books or editions) from materials pulled from your visual journals. I created this class because as a graphic designer design is part of my work daily, but it is such a complex topic that it is not possible to discuss it thoroughly in other classes even if it relates to those other class topics. This allows students to work

at their own pace to understand these components of the page.

*All of the following classes are offered on a specific date which varies year to year. All have a 30-day or several week duration during which students work through materials together.*

### **Drawing Practice: Drawing Live Subjects in Public**

This drawing class is useful for artists at all levels. It is built on the 30-days to a daily practice concept, so there is drawing homework every day, but the homework is created by working through two sessions a week for 4 weeks. Each session deals with a different aspect of drawing, such as gesture, contour, negative space, etc.. This allows the student to leave class with a solid understanding of how all these aspects work within the context of any drawing or painting, but also the class structure helps the student build the daily drawing habit. The Internal Critic is addressed in this class with methods for dealing with it put into practice. Additionally how to use the editing eye and your fresh eye are discussed.

**Textures—Backgrounds for Visual Journaling and Mixed Media** This class introduces all the methods I use for making backgrounds in my journals and other Mixed Media Art.

**The Simple Round Back Spine** This book binding class teaches students to make an elegant case bound book with fabric covered boards. This is an easier approach than traditional rounded spine structures. It still produces a durable structure and is suitable for binders working in a home studio with limited tools. The idea of course is to make a book the size you want containing the paper you want to work on.

## Additional Courses Based on My In-Person Classes Are Now in Production

**The Sewn on the Spine Structure** A great structure for collage artists or those working dimensionally in their journals. This will release in early 2018.

**Color Theory 1 and Color Theory 2** My popular in-person color theory classes are useful for all artists regardless of medium—though I do encourage students to work with watercolor during the class to easily grasp the concepts. (Late 2018-early 2019)

**Gouache: Painting with Opaque Watercolor** This is a translation of my 6-week in-person class into an on-line version. (Late 2018 or early 2019).

## Thank You

I appreciate the invitation to talk with you and to encourage you to enter the present moment through your visual journal.