

Pick the Perfect Art Journal - Choices! Choices! Choices!

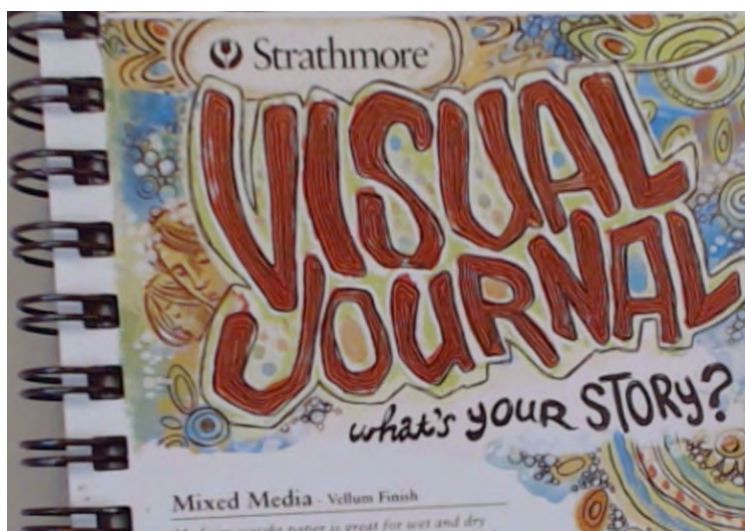


I'm sure you've heard me say how much I love books of all kinds. I love art books, inspirational books, biographies, and how-to books. I love blank books, too, and I love making my own books.

These are just a few of the art journals I've tried.

The primary consideration when choosing an art journal is making your selection based on what you like to do.

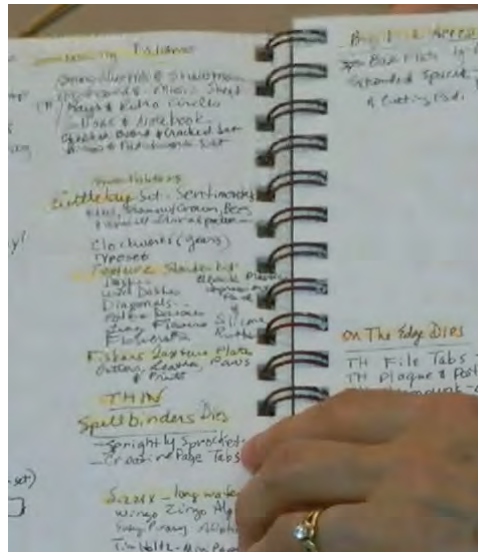
Ready-made Journals



Strathmore makes quite an assortment of journals. My favorites are the **Mixed-Media** and **Visual Journals**. The paper varies in weight and smoothness. Run your fingers across the surface and see what you think. Lightly bend the page (don't crease it) to see the sturdiness of the paper.

The large Visual Journal is 140 lb paper and the small one is 90 lb. I use different large visual journals for different purposes. This sturdy paper will take about anything I throw at it and it stays nice and flat.

Small Visual Journal



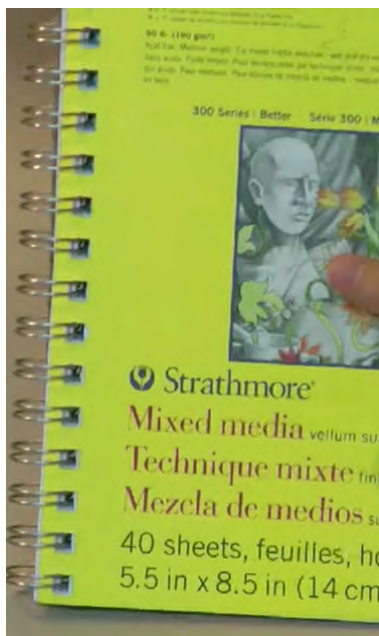
This is a great size to carry with you. You can keep track of supplies that you have or things that you're looking for. Although the paper is lighter in weight, it still takes wet media well.

Visual Journal Pages



Strathmore Visual Journal pages don't tend to warp. The journal gets thick as I add stuff to it, but the pages stay pretty flat and I like that.

Strathmore Mixed-Media 300 Series



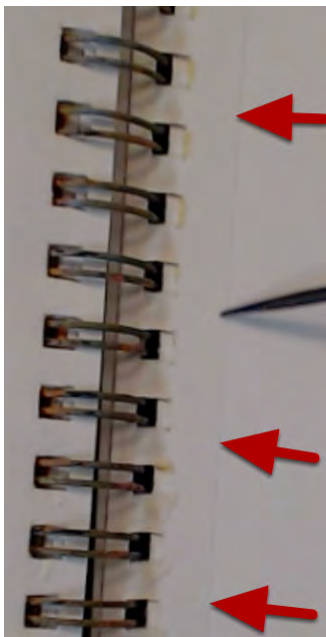
This journal is 1/2" shorter than the small visual journal. It's nice paper and takes wet media well without much warping.

Canson Mixed-Media Journals



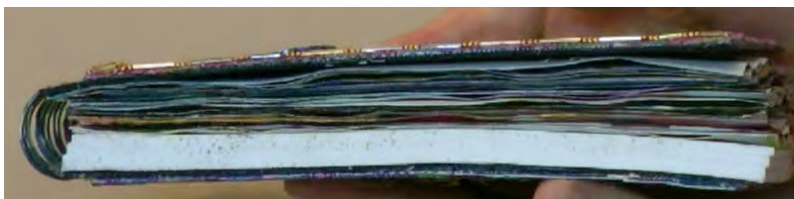
Canson also makes **Mixed-Media Journals** in a variety of sizes. The paper is a nice weight and stands up to quite a bit of wet media application, including paint and glue.

My Gripe About Canson



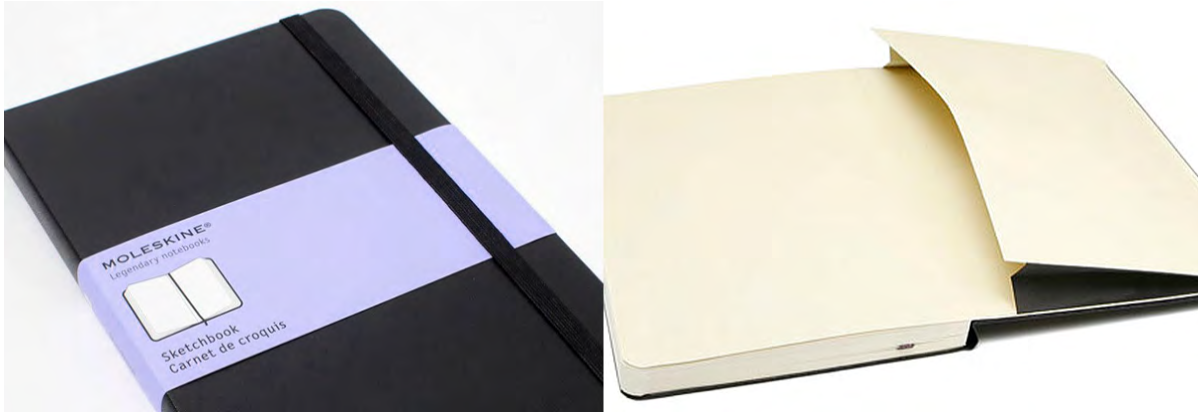
The thing I don't like about it is that the pages are perforated so I end up taping over the perforations or adding gesso or modeling paste for strength. If you want a piece of mixed-media paper to use elsewhere, it tears out easily, however.

Canson Journal Pages Warp



Canson Mixed-Media pages will warp somewhat which you can see here. It's usually not enough to bother me too much, though.

Moleskine Classic Sketchbook



Moleskine Classic Sketchbook (lavender band) has paper which will take a light application of watercolor and collage. Many people use “Molies” for everything. I have one and like it although I think they’re a bit pricey.

Dyan Reaveley's Dylusions Creative Journal

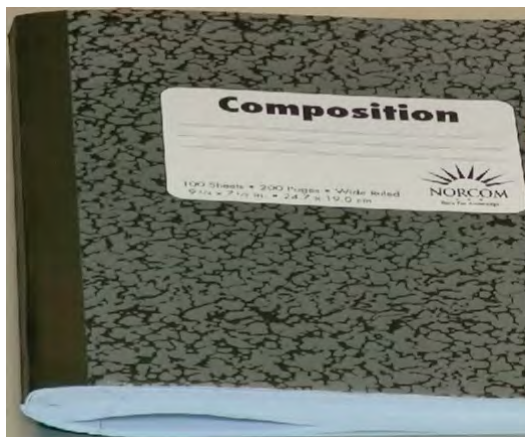


Dyan Reaveley's Dylusions Creative Journal is a combination of manila card stock and matte white heavy card stock ideal for the Dylusions Ink Sprays, and techniques using water, inks, paints and mediums. The journal cover is made from sturdy chipboard. This journal is filled with unlined pages. Although I really like this journal, my personal experience is that you can't “throw too much wet stuff at the paper” or it may begin to pill if you rub the surface. If you let the page dry between layers, results are much better.

This journal is available in 2 sizes:

- 11 3/8" by 8 1/4"
- 8 3/8" by 5 5/8"

Composition Notebook



Composition Notebooks are inexpensive options for art journals. Anytime school supplies are available, composition notebooks are usually plentiful at a very reasonable cost. I like gluing sets of two pages together to “beef up” the paper. Then, I gesso the page which further reinforces the paper.

Smash-type Books



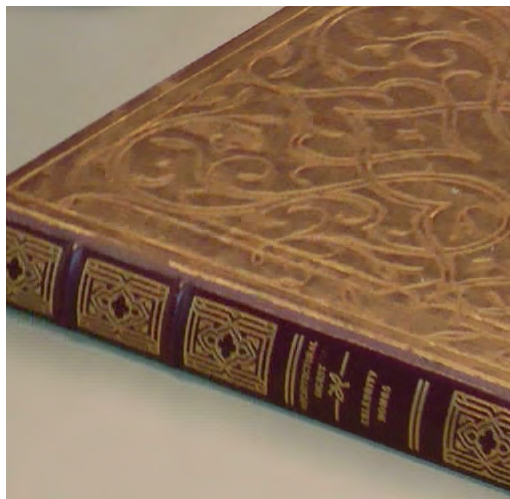
Smash-type Books - made by various companies. The paper in these journals is not meant for wet media such as paint, but it's great for gluing or taping ephemera, receipts, photos, and brochures. I think that smash-type books are the best for organizing your sources of inspiration including photos, magazine images, color combinations, quotes, etc.

Sketch Books



Sketch books are very unhappy if you put too much wet stuff on the pages as they tend to get wimpy very quickly. If you add gesso and build up layers slowly, you can get away with a lot more in a sketch book. Many of them have perforated pages which can be problematic. They are available as wire bound or hardback.

Recycled Books or Magazines



Recycled Books or Magazines - Tear out some of the pages to allow for your additions in this style journal. If the pages are glossy, you'll probably have to sand them (if the paper is substantial enough to handle it) or apply gesso as a base coat for subsequent layers.

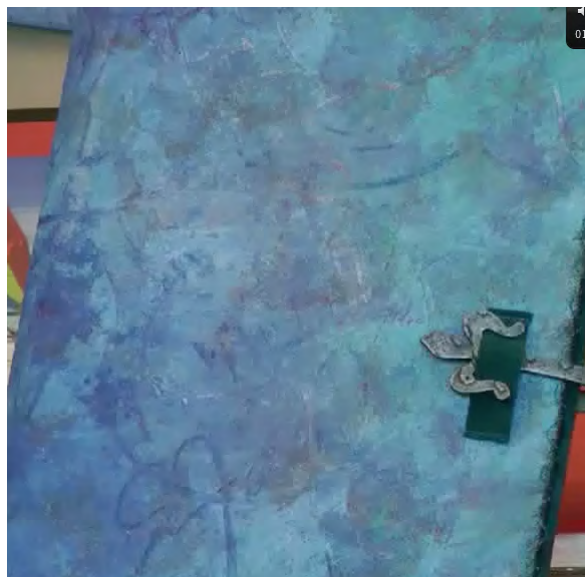
Create Your Own Journal



Water Color paper is ideal for art journals. For most journals, 90 lb or 140 lb are good choices. You can use the cardboard backer from the watercolor pad to create the cover, too.

Try **cold press or hot press paper** - feel the paper! Cold press paper usually has quite a lot of surface texture, but not always. Hot press is much smoother to the touch. Try them both and decide which you prefer.

Handmade Journal



This is an example of a watercolor paper journal with a canvas cover.

Another Handmade Journal



This journal is also created with watercolor pages with the backer cardboard as the cover and sports a duct tape spine.

Junk Mail Journals



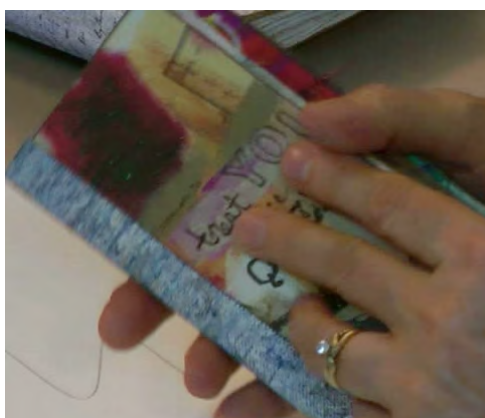
Recycle security envelopes and other junk mail into interesting journals.

More Junk Mail



In this journal, I stitched envelopes and junk paper together to make larger pages before folding and stitching into a journal. These pages have been gessoed to add strength and color continuity to the pages.

Leftovers



This tiny journal is the result of all the leftovers after creating the other junk mail journals and it's the perfect place to hold quotes I collect.

Things to Think About

Do you like perforated pages? If not, select your journal carefully or you'll be dealing with the perforations during the life of the journal.

Journal purpose.

What qualities do you prefer for your journal. Remember that you don't have to choose just one!

You can have a variety of art journals. One might be perfect to collect and illustrate quotes.

Another might be exactly what you need to explore color combinations. Another might be perfect for capturing special events or vacations. Your only limitation is your imagination.

What's the PERFECT Art Journal?



It's the one that you like at the moment and **THIS** is my favorite today!