

BALTIC

Home&School Resource

Judy Chicago Sketchbooks

Judy Chicago Sketchbooks

While we're less able to create together face to face, we'll be sharing ideas and activities for you to explore with Home&School resources. Inspired by BALTIC exhibitions, past and present, and created by BALTIC's Learning and Freelance Artist teams, they'll offer prompts and inspiration for children of all ages, but particularly under 13s, to create together.

You don't need fancy materials or lots of space to be able to try them out; just your imagination and a willingness to experiment. Share your creations on social media and include the hashtag **#balticconnect** or email us your responses **learning@balticmill.com**

Please note: We advise teacher/parental discretion when visiting Judy Chicago's work online.



Judy Chicago *Let it All Hang Out* 1973.
Image: Rob Harris. © BALTIC Centre for
Contemporary Art 2020

Inspired by American feminist artist and art educator, Judy Chicago, and the way she journals her life through her art, this resource will support you to make your own journals, or sketchbooks, and build a bank of ideas to explore within them.

About Judy Chicago at BALTIC

In her 80th birthday year, BALTIC presents the first major UK survey of pioneering feminist artist, author and educator Judy Chicago. The exhibition spans Chicago's fifty-year career, from her 1970s performance work with fireworks in the Californian desert, to her most recent piece, *The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction* (2013-16) captured through photography, painting and drawing.

The artist's self-titled exhibition explores her work from the perspective of the human condition, connecting birth and death and the varying emotional journeys she's experienced. The exhibition also documents Chicago's ongoing concern with the devastating effects of climate change on the natural world.

Watch a virtual tour of the Judy Chicago exhibition here:
<http://baltic.art/judy-spotlight>



Judy Chicago *Smoke Bodies* 1972, *Purple Atmosphere* 1969–2018, *Desert Atmosphere* 1969–2018. Image: Rob Harris © BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art 2020

How to make your sketchbook

Sketchbooks are ideal for any creative situation you find yourself in, but they don't have to be limited to a book. Sketchbooks can be made from anything around you. Think about:

- cereal boxes
- pages from a magazine
- left over wallpaper strips
- paper bags
- post it notes
- letters/envelopes
- leaflets

Start by searching and gathering what's around you... Could you use leaves as some of your sketchbook pages, receipts, large pieces of wrapping paper, leaflets that are posted through your door? Recycle anything around you that inspires and start to make a pile of possibilities.

Whilst sketchbooks are traditionally bound together with thread and embroidery needles, you can bind your sketchbook with anything: elastic bands, paperclips, staples, string, masking tape – they are all great ways to collate your pages.

To make a sketchbook, you'll need:

- Cardboard from cereal packets or packages
- Different types of paper (think about what you might normally recycle)
- Fastenings like: string, ribbon, elastic bands, staples
- Scissors and glue

To work in your sketchbook, you'll need:

- Coloured pencils, crayons, felt tips
- Pencils
- Paints
- Scissors
- Old magazines, leaflets, newspapers
- Scraps of fabric

Ideas for inside your sketchbook

Judy Chicago's *Autobiography of a Year 1993-4*, is a series of 140 works on paper that chronicle the ups and downs of a year from the everyday to the emotionally significant.

See more of Judy's pages: <http://baltic.art/judy>



Experiment

Sketchbooks are a great way to document your ideas and the world around you. Whilst they're often talked about as a journal for drawing, annotating, planning art projects and doodling, sketchbooks can also be used to explore and record more everyday wonders and moments!

Here's some ideas to encourage you to experiment with textures, smells and materials in your new home-made sketchbook:

- Make a smelly drawing by rubbing your page with orange peel.
- Draw with a candle and then cover the paper with water based paint.
- Jump into your sketchbook, let your footprints be the pattern for your page.
- Create a viewfinder by cutting a random shape into your page. What can you see of the world around you through it?
- Cover your page with glue and drop, trickle and scatter different materials on to it; think about what you might find in the garden as a starter.
- Capture the weather by allowing raindrops to fall on your page or trace the sun's rays on it.
- Dribble paint on your paper, let the random lines be the pattern to your page.

Judy Chicago *Autobiography of a Year 1993-4*. Image: Rob Harris © BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art 2020

Ideas for inside your sketchbook

Can you recreate a colour wheel in your sketchbook?

- Try making your own by copying and colouring, or print one out if you can.
- Start your colour wheel in the middle of a double page then extend each segment out with paint, collage, pens, crayons, pencils.
- Look closely at the colour wheel-half of the wheel has cold colours and half has warm. Cold colours are greens, blues and purples. Warm colours are red, yellow and orange. In your sketchbook, try making a 'cold' page or a 'warm' page using just those colours. Draw things that are warm and on the other page draw things that are cold. You could even just make a page of colours without drawing, try using paint or collage.

Using colour to explore emotions

One of the first drawings in *Autobiography of a Year* annotated 'All the colours of the year', shows an index that codes specific colours to emotional states. The coding allows the work to be easily understood by the viewer and offers an insight into Chicago's daily mood.

Feelings are funny things and it's important to think about how feelings and creativity go hand in hand.

- What colour do you think of when you're feeling happy, sad, angry, scared, excited, confused?
- Create your own chart or index of colours and the emotions that match.
- Can you make a drawing using only those colours to explain how you are feeling?

Use the colour wheel to explore feelings and their relationship to colour just like Judy Chicago.

The colour wheel is a visual representation of colours and can remind us how to mix them. Primary colours are blue, red and yellow and by mixing these, we can create all of the other colours in the rainbow. Notice where the blue, red and yellow are on the colour wheel. Everything between each of those can be made by mixing the two primaries outside of them; so mix red and yellow and you'll make shades of orange; yellow and blue makes green and red and blue makes purple.



Ideas for inside your sketchbook

Music can stir up all sorts of emotions in us too. Listen to music while you draw and be inspired to create a piece of work through its notes and words and how they make you feel.

- Start a new page in your sketchbook
- Grab some things to draw with
- Put on some of your favourite music
- Listen carefully to how the music sounds and move your hand to the music across the page to make marks
- These might be just lines or shapes – try not to overthink them
- Perhaps you'll have spiky shapes and lines for fast dance music, flowing curves for a spot of smooth jazz or never-ending spirals for *Baby Shark!*
- Once you've finished, work back into your drawing; add patterns and colours where you spot gaps.
- Think about using different shades of colours – if you're using paint, mix in more white or black to make the colour lighter or darker.
- Do this drawing exercise with lots of different types of music, choosing your colours carefully so they go with the mood of the song.



Judy Chicago *Desert Atmosphere* 1969-2018. Image: Rob Harris © BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art 2020

Further ideas

How do other artists use colour? Check our digital archive website balticplus.uk and search:

Mariah Robertson
Daniel Buren
Pedro Cabrita Reis

- Look at the work of Joy Labinjo on baltic.art/joy
- What colours has Joy chosen to put together? Look back at your colour wheel, are the colours you see in her work opposite or next to each other? Do you think the colours work together? What colours would you choose to create a background? Try using the colour wheel to think about other colourful paintings.
- Can you make an alternative colour wheel using flowers from your garden, food or toys from around your house. Take a picture and share it using [#balticconnect](https://twitter.com/balticconnect)
- Do colours mean different things in different cultures? Research countries and cultures across the world and the colours that are important to them. Why not start with finding out about what colours do royal families from around the world use? What colours are in the flags of different countries?
- Explore the work of Keri Smith and her 'Wreck this Journal' books. Look at images online and see if you can be inspired to create more pages in your sketchbook.
- Have fun reading '*The Day the Crayons Quit*' by Oliver Jeffers or watch it on YouTube and find out about the personalities of different crayons – can you create colour personalities in your drawings? What would red be like if it was a person? What things would yellow like to create? What would Green's favourite joke be?

Be more Judy and experiment...

- Judy created 140 drawings for *Autobiography of a Year* (1993-4) where she captured her mood through daily drawings. Channel Judy Chicago and do a drawing a day; document your morning, dreams, your view, your daily mood, a week or a month.
- Judy's most famous artwork is a large-scale installation called *Dinner Party* (1974-79). It documents significant female figures in history, who would you invite to your dinner party? Draw them? What would you all eat? What the table would look like and what would be on it?
- In 1999, Judy Chicago created a series of watercolour images entitled *Kitty City* inspired by her many pet cats. Over the years, Judy continued to feature her cats in her work, most recently in her *Autobiography of a Year* where she drew them in different colours to suit her moods. Think about animals you like, or pets that you have and try drawing them lots of different times and in lots of different colours. Use your imagination: What colour would a happy cat be? What about a lonely giraffe? A sleepy hippo? Would being angry, excited or hungry change the colour of your animal?



Judy Chicago *Study for Hrosvitha Runner Back Needlework Kit* 1987.
Image: Rob Harris © BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art 2020

Key Words

abstract / experiment / feeling
viewfinder / recycle / document
journal / complimentary / shades
hues / five senses / line / shape
feminist / colour theory