

Books Recommended by JAMs Members

Books about Creativity and Inspiration

The Little Spark: 30 Ways to Ignite Your Creativity by Carrie Bloomston

The official blurb: “You were born with a creative spark inside. Do you look at yourself now and wonder if the spark has gone out? Ignite that inner fire with the 30 engaging exercises, fun activities, inspirational images, and motivating ideas in this book...Read the book cover-to-cover and use it as a month-long creative roadmap, or just dip into the exercises as your time and inclination allow. Either way, you will change your life.”

Not just for visual artists (Carrie includes contributions from chefs, musician, dancers, etc.) it is much more of a self-help/spiritual (not religious) book, rather than an art project instruction approach. This is wonderful and thought-provoking book to kick you into gear (if you need that kick) and help you overcome negative thought patterns and self-doubt. “Being a creative person means way more than making cool stuff. It is a way of being in the world.”

Life is a Verb by Patti Digh

In October 2003, Patti Digh’s stepfather was diagnosed with lung cancer. He died 37 days later. The timeframe made an impression on her. What emerged was a commitment to ask herself every morning: What would I be doing today if I had only 37 days left to live? The answers changed her life and led to this new kind of book. Part meditation, part how-to guide, part memoir, *Life is a Verb* is all heart.

Within these pages—enhanced by original artwork and wide, inviting margins ready to be written in—Digh identifies six core practices to jump-start a meaningful life: Say Yes, Trust Yourself, Slow Down, Be Generous, Speak Up, and Love More. Within this framework she supplies 37 edgy, funny, and literary life stories, each followed by a “do it now” 10-minute exercise as well as a practice to try for 37 days—and perhaps the rest of your life.

Art at the Speed of Life by Pam Carriker

An art-making workshop in a book, *Creating Art at the Speed of Life* offers a 30-day syllabus, introducing and exploring each element in a series of exercises, complete with worksheets to help you evaluate your work and make it more successful and satisfying.

In an “open studio” at the end of each chapter, well-known contributing artists share inspirational work focused on that chapter’s element. With Pam's lessons and advice on how to assess your artwork, you will experiment and grow into a more confident artist.

One Zentangle A Day: A 6-Week Course in Creative Drawing for Relaxation, Inspiration, and Fun by Beckah Krahula

One Zentangle A Day is a beautiful interactive book teaching the principles of Zentangles as well as offering fun, related drawing exercises. Zentangles are a new trend in the drawing and paper arts world. The concept was started by Rick Roberts and Maria Thomas as a way to practice focus and meditation through drawing, by using repetitive lines, marks, circles, and shapes. Each mark is called a “tangle,” and you combine various tangles into patterns to create “tiles” or small square drawings. This step-by-step book is divided into 6 chapters,

each with 7 daily exercises. Each exercise includes new tangles to draw in sketchbooks or on tiepolo (an Italian-made paper), teaches daily tile design, and offers tips on related art principles, and contains an inspirational “ZIA” (Zentangle Inspired Art) project on a tile that incorporates patterns, art principals, and new techniques.

Kaleidoscope: ideas and projects to spark your creativity by Suzanne Simanaitis

Are you passionately curious? Let *Kaleidoscope* open new doors of creativity as you explore dozens of stories, exercises and instructive projects, all designed to feed, encourage and sometimes flex your creative muscle.

Between the beautiful pages of *Kaleidoscope*, you’ll tap into the joy of drawing, be encouraged to create art in bed, create your own folded-paper shrine, discover the liberation of stream-writing, practice idea brainstorming, make your own duct-tape purse, learn to quiet the negative voice in your head, dream up your own creative studio space and much, much more.

Gee’s Bend: The Architecture of the Quilt edited by Paul Arnett et al

The museum catalog that accompanied the museum exhibitions of the Gee’s Bend quilts.

Two other museum catalogs I find especially inspiring these days are *The Watercolors of John Singer Sargent* edited by Erica E. Hirshler and Teresa A. Carbone and *The World is an Apple: The Still Lifes of Paul Cezanne* edited by Benedict Leca.

Judy Gula also recommends museum catalogs for inspiration and because they “help me to get through the dark winter months, when actually creating in the dark is difficult.”

Pictorial Webster’s: A Visual Dictionary of Curiosities by John M. Carrera

This book has over 1500 of the original illustrations from the 1898 Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary. John Carrera located, catalogued cleaned and restored the original dies, a task that took 10 years. His work has resulted in a large exhibition at MassMOCA, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in the spring of 2013. A pocket version is also available.

BiblioCraft: The Modern Crafter's Guide to Using Library Resources to Jumpstart Creative Projects by Jessica Pigza

Includes a good section on copyright. A Library List best book of 2014.

A Colorful Book by Yvonne Porcella

A few pages of text at the beginning, a few captions, and a few pages of illustrated techniques at the end. The rest of this book consists of big photos of Yvonne’s quilts, kimonos and other garments, plus gorgeous layouts of items that inspire her. This is another “inspiration book,” still timely, created by one of the godmothers of fiber art.

Books about Mixed Media

Mixed Mania: Recipes for Delicious Mixed Media Creations by Debbi Crane & Cheryl Prater

This is an older title that is organized and written alluding to a cookbook. The instructions are clear and the book includes a lot of photographs for inspiration. There are a lot of little tricks and tidbits sprinkled throughout. There is a “back & forth” dialogue between the two authors (including reprinted emails) that struck me as a bit too cutesy, but I like the variety of mixed media projects presented and that they are truly mixed media, using paper and fabric and more, and include assemblage projects.

Adventures in Mixed Media: Collage, Stitch, Fuse, and Journal Your Way to a More Creative Life by Jane Davies

Another older title. This is a good book both for those just beginning to explore mixed media, since Jane is so encouraging and explains processes well, but it's not so simplistic that an experienced artist can't enjoy it too. She covers the differences in papers and how to make them your own with surface design, explains the differences in mediums and paints and how to use them, and much more...all beautifully photographed. Pages for art journals, paper dolls, paper mosaics, fused (or simply stitched) fabric projects and much more are included. I like her light-hearted, whimsical approach.

By the Batch: Creative Cards, Postcards, Envelopes and More by Judi Kauffman

Judi's premise is “why make one card/collage/envelope when you can make a dozen?” so her focus is on setting up the workspace to work on several pieces at once. What I like best about this book is that it summarizes some of the old techniques that drew us to rubber stamping and papercrafts in the first place. Judi talks about card layouts and composition, illustrating a variety of ways to vary your cards (or ATCs). (So why are my cards always center stage layout? Loosen up, Ellen!) In the rest of the book she prepares 25 batches of cards and envelopes using different stamping and stenciling techniques, faux postage, magic stamp backgrounds, round and shape cards, and embellishments. Best of all, Judi uses some of those old stamps that we remember and are trying to snatch up on eBay!

Books about Journaling

Journal Junkies Workshop by Eric Scott & David Modler

Journal Junkies Workshop includes information on

- Basic information on the supplies and materials you'll need to start your journal experience.
- Step-by-step presentation of techniques using water colors, acrylic paint, image transfers and more.
- Chapter-by-chapter demonstration that follows the Junkies' techniques as they layer a page, taking it from blank canvas to dynamic document.
- Ideas on how to get started writing in your journal, covering both what to write and inventive ways of writing it.
- Gallery spreads taken straight from the authors' journals that give you a unique opportunity to peer inside the heads of two experienced art journalists

Doodle, Draw, Journal: an art journaling workbook by Kristy Conlin

Doodle, Draw, Journal includes:

- 18 demonstrations for drawing techniques such as silhouettes, flourishes, contours and faces.
- Oodles of doodling prompts so you're never left drawing a blank.
- Ample space for you to doodle, draw and journal right inside this book.

Art Journal Courage by Dina Wakley

Art Journal Courage dispels eight common journaling fears, such as self-doubt and what to put on the blank page. It also includes a number of techniques and exercises to give you art journal courage and dozens of colorful art journal pages for inspiration.

True Colors: A Palette of Collaborative Art Journals by Kathryn Bold

Fifteen artists each chose colors or color combinations and began an art journal based on the colors. They traveled to every artist. This is an "inspiration book," in fact, I had to limit myself to reading only a few pages at a time because it could send me off in a frenzy of ideas. It still does. The artists write thoughtfully about why they did what they did, what emotions, memories and associations each color evoked in them. If I could keep only one book from my huge library, this is the one.

The Decorated Page: Journals, Scrapbooks & Albums Made Simply Beautiful by Gwen Diehn

Most of the book is devoted to the how-to's, from customizing a blank book to avoiding the straight and narrow via mandalas, diagonals, cutouts, or grids. Illustrations come from the artist's perspective: a textured 3-D diary and a rolling-wheels travel journey, among many others. Two- to three-page sidebars highlight specific genres, such as pillow books, nature journals, and illuminated manuscripts. Ten sample pages feature such methods as mapping, storytelling, and information gathering.

Books about Book Art

Making Books That Fly, Fold, Wrap, Hide, Pop Up, Twist and Turn by Gwen Diehn

This was marketed as a kids' book. So the text and illustrations are very clear. I am not so great at book techniques and have found that this book explains some things much more clearly than most of my "adult" books on the same subjects.

By the way, Gwen has written some other very good books including *The Decorated Page* and *The Decorated Journal*. I see that the two of them are now combined into a book called *The Complete Decorated Journal*.

Altered Books Workshop by Bev Brazelton

Turn old books into personalized works of art with *Altered Books Workshop*. Altered books bring together a variety of mixed media and papercrafting techniques including collage, journaling, rubber stamping, embellishing and scrapbooking.

Through 18 step-by-step demonstrations and 65 variation ideas, Bev Brazelton teaches basic, intermediate and creative techniques for crafting unique altered books. You'll find helpful tips as you're guided through the process of altering pages along with captivating embellishment ideas such as adding doors and drawers to your altered books.

The Penland Book of Handmade Books: master classes in bookmaking techniques edited by Jane LeFerla and Veronika Gunter

This is NOT a how-to book. Rather it shows how master bookmakers make their books. Beautiful examples and some techniques are included.

re-bound: creating books from recycled and repurposed materials by Jeannine Stein

Step-by-step instructions are easy to follow and has good illustrations and examples.

Eco Books: Inventive Projects from the recycling bin by Terry Taylor

Similar to *re-bound*. The instructions are a little clearer, but with fewer examples of the steps.

Books, Boxes and Portfolios: Binding, Construction and Design Step-by-Step by Franz Zeier

Great instructions with wonderful illustrations. This was one of the first books on bookmaking I bought.

Books about Fabrics, Stitching and Beading

First time beading on Fabrics -- learning to bead in 9 easy lessons by Liz Kettle

First-Time Beading on Fabric teaches nine beading techniques in nine easy lessons. Seed stitch, moss stitch, couching, backstitch, bugle beads, stacks, fringe, picot edge and peyote stitch. After practicing the beading stitches and techniques on the quilt sampler or stitch book, you will be ready to create the unique Beaded Garden Quilt to showcase your new skills. Complete step-by-step instructions and how-to. Hundreds of color photographs throughout.

Fabric Embellishing: The Basics and Beyond by Liz Kettle

Another "must have" according to many JAMs members.

Stupendous Stitching by Carol Ann Waugh

This is a great book for any sewers who want to make highly decorated pieces of fabric art for their home

The Quilted Garden by Jane Sassaman

Award-winning quiltmaker Jane Sassaman is known for her bold designs celebrating the energy and miraculous beauty of garden flowers and plants. Joy and enthusiasm radiate from every quilt! Now, in her first book, Jane shares her methods and inspirations.

Your Machine's Decorative Stitches by Karen Lindusk

Learn to use all of the stitches that come with your sewing machine. Go past straight stitches and zigzags, and pump your quilts with surface design excitement. Appealing not only to the beginning quilter, this book will remind every quilter of all the choices available at her/his fingertips. Written for any brand of machine, Karen shows you how to use and manipulate those stitches to maximize surface embellishment. Practice on 12 small projects, then combine decorative stitch techniques to make two larger wallhangings.

Creative Uses for Decorative Stitches by Karen Linduska

Take your quilts to the next level of creativity by using the decorative stitches built into your sewing machine. These stitches were created to mimic hand embroidery, and most of them do that and more. Karen shows how to find multiple uses for a single stitch, how to combine stitches, and how to best use threads and stabilizers. The 11 projects are intended to serve as practice for getting to know what your machine can do, and to see how to use each project's stitches in ways unique to your own artistic vision. Stitches are cleverly grouped into forms, such as flowers, leaves, stems, bushes, ferns, grids, shapes, and fillers. Mixing and matching stitches, thread weights, and items from these groups gives the reader unlimited options for spicing up their quilts. Written as a companion volume to Karen's first book, readers who love to experiment will find that this book, written for any type of sewing machine, can stand alone.

Strange Material: Storytelling through Textiles by Leanne Prain

Strange Material includes chapters on various aspects of textile storytelling, from "Textiles of Protest, Politics, and Power" to "The Fabric of Remembrance," it also includes specific projects, such as the well-known and profoundly moving Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, as well as poetry mittens, button blankets, and stitched travel diaries. Offbeat, poetic, and subversive, *Strange Material* will inspire readers to re-imagine the possibilities of creating through needle and fabric.

The Stitch Bible by Kate Haxell

The Stitch Bible is a wonderful reference with 225 embroidery stitches and techniques plus 17 projects.

Stitch Draw: design and technique for figurative stitching by Rosie James

Figurative stitch work is a hot new look, and Rosie James—a leading exponent of the style—takes newcomers by the hand and guides them through its ins and outs. Using her own gorgeous drawings, plus those of other top artists, she lays out a repertoire of techniques. James covers it all, including transferring drawing to cloth, stitching on photographs, using multicolored threads, layering images, and creating a pleasing composition.

Inspired to Design: Seven Steps to Successful Art Quilts by Elizabeth Barton

Very good coverage of design principles in creating designs from our own inspirations. I've taken a 5-day class from her and this book is almost like having her in my studio.

Better Homes and Gardens Complete Guide to Quilting

Good for general information on quilting.

Modern Hand Stitching: Dozens of Stitches with Creative Free-Form Variations by Ruth Chandler

Recommended as a "must-have" by many JAMs members.

The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America by Carrie Hall and Rose Kretsinger

This book is a classic in quilt history. First published in 1935 it reflects the romance of the Colonial Revival. The language is flowery and the history is not completely accurate, more the idealized version of history typical of the period. The original pictures are black and white. It is a delightful slice of our quilting history.

The Fabric Makes the Quilt by Roberta Horton

Intro says "how you can go from preformed blocks to free form quilts." Mentioned by several JAMs members; "one of my go to books since 1995."

Color By Accident by Ann Johnston

This is my go-to book for dyeing. I keep the pages with the recipes for soda ash and dye solutions flagged with sticky notes. Her instructions are clear and precise, with all formulas shown for varying amounts of cloth. She covers low-water immersion dyeing with several variations. It is sensibly formatted, small and spiral bound.

Adventures in Circles: Quilt Designs from Start to Finish by Leigh McDonald

A good source for embellishments

Surface Treatment Workshop: Explore 45 Mixed Media Techniques by Darlene McElroy and Sandra Wilson

Good step-by-step instructions with several variations of each technique. A Library Book List best books of 2014

More Fabric Art Collage: 64 New Techniques for Mixed Media, Surface Design & Embellishment by Rebekah Meier

I wanted this book as soon as I saw the cover, and flipping through the pages reinforced that...I bought it immediately. I page through it just for pleasure, but she does give very clear explanations of her techniques. I appreciate that she uses materials in different ways, and uses what's on hand at home, or inexpensive materials. I haven't done nearly enough exploring of her processes on my own, but the book remains interesting to me to pick up and read or look at repeatedly. (What's funny to me is that it is a follow-up to her first book, but for some reason I have never sought that out. I'm sure I'd like it!)

Embroidery & Crazy Quilt Stitch Tool by Judith Montano

If you are left-handed this is a must-have reference. The spiral bound 6 x 5 inch book stands up for easy viewing. It is very easy to flip to the page you need. The illustrations for left-handers are easy to follow. I would definitely recommend this book for anyone who wants to add stitches to their art projects.

- Compact, take-anywhere guide to more than 180 stitches and stitch combinations for hand embroidery, silk ribbon embroidery, and crazy quilting
- Beautifully illustrated in full color for both left- and right-handers
- Alphabetical stitch listing and illustrated category index make any stitch easy to find
- Handy chart shows which needles to use with various threads and yarns
- Essential tool for any needle worker or quilter who wants to enhance a sewing project with hand embroidery

Stitch Alchemy: Combining Fabric + Paper for Mixed Media Art by Kelli Perkins

When I first saw this technique it was a big "bingo!" for me. I love, love, LOVE words and books and typography...being able to incorporate those into something that can be stitched is amazing. Beautiful cheerful bright color...a happy book! I haven't created papercloth anywhere near to her level yet, but it remains fun and inspiring.

The Left-Handed Embroiderer's Companion: A Step-by-Step Stitch Dictionary by Yvette Stanton

Good for embroidery stitches. There's a right-handed version as well.

Threads by Debbie Bates and Liz Kettle

This is a great resource for information about threads and machine stitching, including understanding tension. The book takes the reader on a journey through the different types of thread and how to use them. In the process, the reader/stitcher completes a "passport," a booklet of fabric pages on which the reader/stitcher experiments with the different ways to use thread and stitches.

Stitch Magic by Jan Beaney and Jean Littlejohn

I love this book for its photographs of beautiful stitching. Most of the book is about hand stitching and how to use stitching to interpret a vision. It includes excellent descriptions of the different stitches used and how to get the effects shown. I'd be happy with just the photos, to be honest.

Jewelry

A Charming Exchange: 25 Jewelry Projects To Create & Share by Ruth Rae and Kelly Snelling Kelly

This is a documentation of A Charming Exchange, where incredibly talented artists created and exchanged unique charm bracelets, earrings and talismans a few years back. The photography is just amazing! Again, I have nowhere near the skill level to pull off what they do, but the creativity and talent is really inspiring to me. It's another book where I haven't made any of the projects that are detailed in the book (but it does seem doable, the way they explain it), but I look at it again and again simply for pleasure.

DVD

Art Quilt Workshop/Natural Wonders by Kathy McNeil

Kathy makes wonderful pictorial quilts. The DVD takes the viewer through the making of a landscape quilt and focuses on various techniques. I found it clear and easy to understand. It is available from kathymcneilquilts.com.

Thermofax 101: Screen Printing Made Easy DVD Workshop with Lyric Kinard

Thermofax 101: Screen Printing Made Easy DVD Workshop by Lyric Kinard

This DVD includes great color theory and layout information for any level of fiber artist as well as helpful suggestions on pattern movement and color choices. I found it interesting how Lyric played off the different types of paint—transparent versus opaque—in the layers of pattern, and her use of extender mediums. Visit the Artistic Artifacts blog at <http://www.artisticartifacts.com/blog/?p=3923> for the full review.