

Nature Journals and Journaling at Home

By Caponi Art Park

Project Overview:

Recommended for ages 8+

Engage with the natural world through the art of bookmaking! After their books are bound, participants will embark on a nature walk, making notes and sketches in their new journals as they go. These journals will be a showcase of what they observe and learn from their experience at their local park, or in their own backyard, and can be used on future adventures in nature, too.

Supply List:

- Book board (Cardboard, old cereal boxes, anything firmer than standard paper will work) You need two pieces, one for front and one for back, should be cut to a smaller size, the same size as whatever paper you choose to use.
- Construction paper or printer paper (approximately 10 pages, cut down to half the size of normal printer paper)
- Scissors
- Crayons and/or markers or paint
- Glue
- Scrap paper for collaging (newspaper, magazine, old wrapping paper or tissue paper. Anything colorful or with some kind of pattern/words will work)
- Yarn, string or twine (If the cardboard you are using is thin enough, a stapler will also work)
- Hole punch (if you are using string)
- One stick or dowel per participant (roughly the length of the journal, a little longer is fine, too.)

Instructions:

- Have two pieces of book board (or any kind of cardboard) per participant ready with 5 holes punched in each piece of book board. If you do not have a hole punch, an adult should use something sharp to poke holes. If your cardboard is thin enough, you can skip the holes and use a stapler at the end.
- Before assembling, participants should spend a good amount of time decorating the front and back of their nature journals. This can be done with marker, crayons, paint, scrap collage paper or any miscellaneous items you might have around, such as feathers or stickers.

- Take approximately 5 pieces of paper and cut them to fit the size of the front and back pieces of the nature journal. This should leave you with about 10 pages for the inside of your journal, front and back.
- Punch 5 holes close to the side of the papers, running evenly spaced from top to bottom. These holes should match up with the ones punched into the cardboard as best as possible. If you are not making holes, skip this step, and you can staple your book together. If you are using holes to bind your book, continue to the next step.
- Gather one stick per student that is roughly the height of the journal.
- Place the pre-cut pages between the two decorated pieces of book board and place the stick on the hole-punched side to be bound. Line up all of the holes as best you can.
- Take string or twine and loop through punched holes and around the sticks, binding the books together. It is best to wrap around the stick 2-3 times, then through the hole, then continue down the length of the book repeating this process until all of the pages and book board are tightly bound together by the string and stick.
- Tie off the string. If your book is loosely bound, that is ok.
- Once all of the materials have been assembled, and the decorative materials have completely dried, participants should take their journals, along with a writing utensil, outdoors and be encouraged to make observational notes and drawings in their journals.

Example of finished Nature Journal:



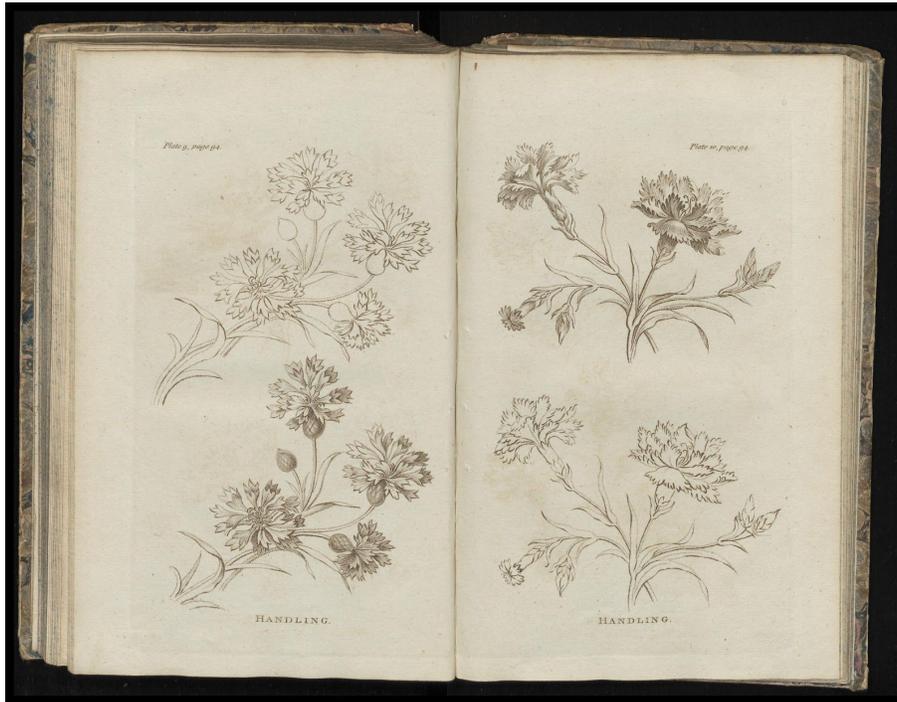
Discussion Questions:

- Do you take notes when you are in class? Do you draw when you are in art class? Nature journaling is like a combination of both!
- What types of subjects or events are worth taking notes or journaling about?

- What are your favorite things to draw? Did you find anything interesting to draw while you explored the outdoors? What made it so interesting that you decided to draw it or make notes about it?

Short Lesson for Nature Journals workshop:

- Today you will be making a book out of natural and recycled materials, including twigs, paper, and yarn or ribbon.
- The first book was bound in India in 100 BCE. Religious texts were copied onto palm leaves, which were split down the middle, dried, and rubbed with ink. These finished leaves were numbered and bound with twine.
- Since the first book was bound, there has been much progress in the techniques used to bind books, methods of keeping books safe (dust-jackets), and book preservation.
- Artists and naturalists use bound journals to record and sketch their observations and also keep samples of inspirational material.
- In your nature journal, you will be able to take rubbings of different textures, draw plants, animals and objects that you see, and also keep samples of nature that you find on while exploring nature.



- Next time you're at Caponi Art Park, make sure to draw and write about the different sculptures you encounter, and then share them with your friends and family!