



BLOT DRAWING

12 Ink Blots for Creative Exploration

"If you look upon an old wall covered with dirt, or the odd appearance of some streaked stones, you may discover several things like landscapes, battles, clouds, uncommon attitudes, humorous faces, draperies, etc. Out of this confused mass of objects, the mind will be furnished with an abundance of designs and subjects perfectly new."
— Leonardo da Vinci

FROM ACCIDENTAL MARKS TO NEW IDEAS

The idea behind blot drawing has a long history. Leonardo da Vinci encouraged artists to look for images and ideas in stains, streaked stones, clouds, and other seemingly random patterns. In the 18th century, British artist and drawing teacher Alexander Cozens took Leonardo's idea a step further. Instead of waiting to discover accidental marks, Cozens deliberately created them. His blot method used quickly made ink marks, part chance, part design, as starting points for inventing landscape compositions. The resulting forms could then be interpreted, developed, and transformed into finished drawings.

These pages borrow the spirit of the exercise, but you don't need to make a landscape, or anything in particular, you might see people, animals, monsters, plants, or, really, ANYTHING!

WHY A BLOT?

A blot gives your imagination something to respond to. Rather than beginning with a blank page and wondering what to draw, you begin with an unexpected shape and ask "What could this become?"

Blot drawing can help you:

- Loosen up and quiet your inner critic
- Generate unexpected subjects and compositions
- Practice seeing shapes, figures, spaces, and relationships
- Develop visual imagination and associative thinking
- Find new directions when you feel creatively stuck

There is no correct interpretation. The point isn't to recognize the "right" image. The point is to discover your own.

HOW TO USE THESE BLOTS

1. LOOK.

Choose a blot and turn it around. Give yourself time to see what emerges.

2. NOTICE.

Look for anything that catches your attention: a face, figure, creature, landscape, object, architectural form, movement, or simply an interesting shape.

3. RESPOND.

Use pencil, pen, marker, paint, or whatever you like. Outline what you see, add to it, transform it, exaggerate it, or take it somewhere completely unexpected.

4. DON'T OVERTHINK IT.

Your first idea is simply a place to begin.

5. KEEP LOOKING.

If you don't see anything, rotate the blot and look again. One shape can suggest many possibilities.

THERE ARE NO WRONG ANSWERS.

Look. Imagine. Draw. Discover!

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So there is no excuse – **MAKE ART NOW!**











