

Interdependence — A Mindful Art Practice

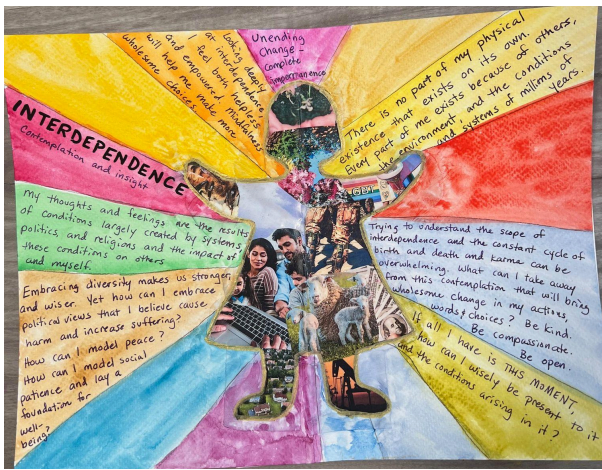
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Including art as part of our dharma practice allows us to integrate multiple sense doors for deepened insight. Through the creative process, we combine our mindful contemplation with a somatic, hands-on experience that results in a visual representation of our practice. This practice invites us to contemplate our interdependence, impermanence, and impact.

This practice is *not* about making art. The creative process simply opens a new doorway for insight.

If you do not have art materials, this mindful art practice can be adapted using simple household items such as paper, pen, and scissors. Instructions for the adaptations are *italicized*.

Sample:



Art Materials:

- Small collage images that represent all the elements that are necessary for you to be alive today. Look deeply to bring awareness to all areas including history, culture, nature, science, etc. Some elements may include:
 - Nature: sky, earth, rain, oceans, trees, roots, mushrooms, lichen, forests, deserts, etc.
 - Industries: farming, transportation, commercial, manufacturing, health care, communication
 - Religion: churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, other symbols
 - Politics & geography, etc.
 - Relationships
- 1-2 sheets of paper or cardstock OR Art journal and 1 extra sheet of paper or cardstock
- Glue
- Scissors
- Sharpie or acrylic marker

- Gesso (or white/pastel color acrylic paint)
- Watercolors, colored pencils, or pastel color acrylics (optional)
- Waterproof pen/marker, gel pen, etc.

General Instructions:

Please bring mindfulness to each step of this practice. You might consider:

- Where did the materials you are using come from? How did they come to be in your hands?
- What conditions were necessary for the creation and transport of these materials?
- How have these conditions changed?
- How do the materials change as you interact with them?

Practice:

- On the large sheet of paper, draw a silhouette of yourself (like a gingerbread figure). Cut out. *Adaptation: Draw a large outline of a human figure to represent yourself in the center of your paper. Make sure it is large enough for you to write inside of it.*



- Place the cutout on your journal or extra sheet of paper. Trace around it to create an outline. Set aside the cutout for use later.



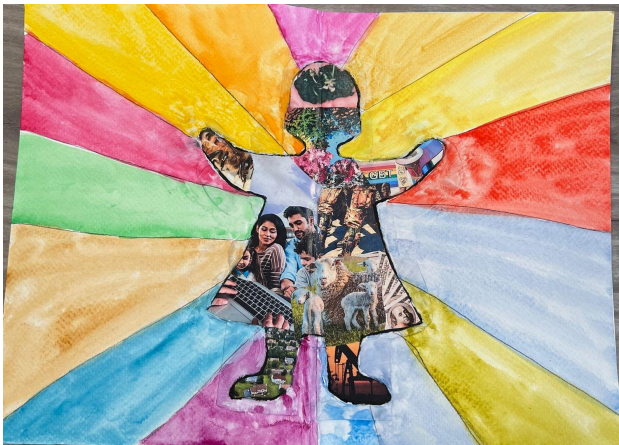
- Select some collage images from the print-outs, or use images of your own. Inside the traced outline of the cutout, glue in the collage images. It's okay to have images go beyond the edges of the silhouette. We will work on that later. *Adaptation: Write inside the silhouette all the elements that are necessary for you to be alive today. See some possible elements under Art Materials. Fill the silhouette with these elements.*



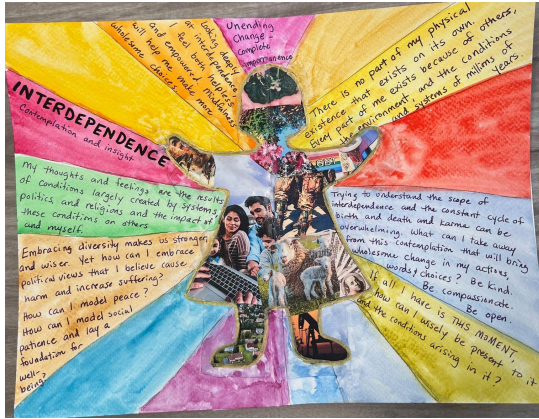
- Draw radiant lines from the silhouette to the edges of the page. These “rays” extending from the collage silhouette represent glimmers of awakening. *Adaptation will also draw these rays.*



- If desired, color in the sections of radiant lines.



- In one of the sections, write the name of this practice in bold letters so you can easily reference it at a later date.



- In the remaining sections created by the rays, write insights based on your contemplation of interdependence. *Adaptation will also do this writing.*
 - What insights become apparent to you?
 - How might understanding interdependence impact the way you live in the coming year?
 - Choices you make in behavior, purchases, work, hobbies, occupations, etc.
- Continue to work on your paper adding colors, flourishes, words, or decorative elements until you feel it is completed.

