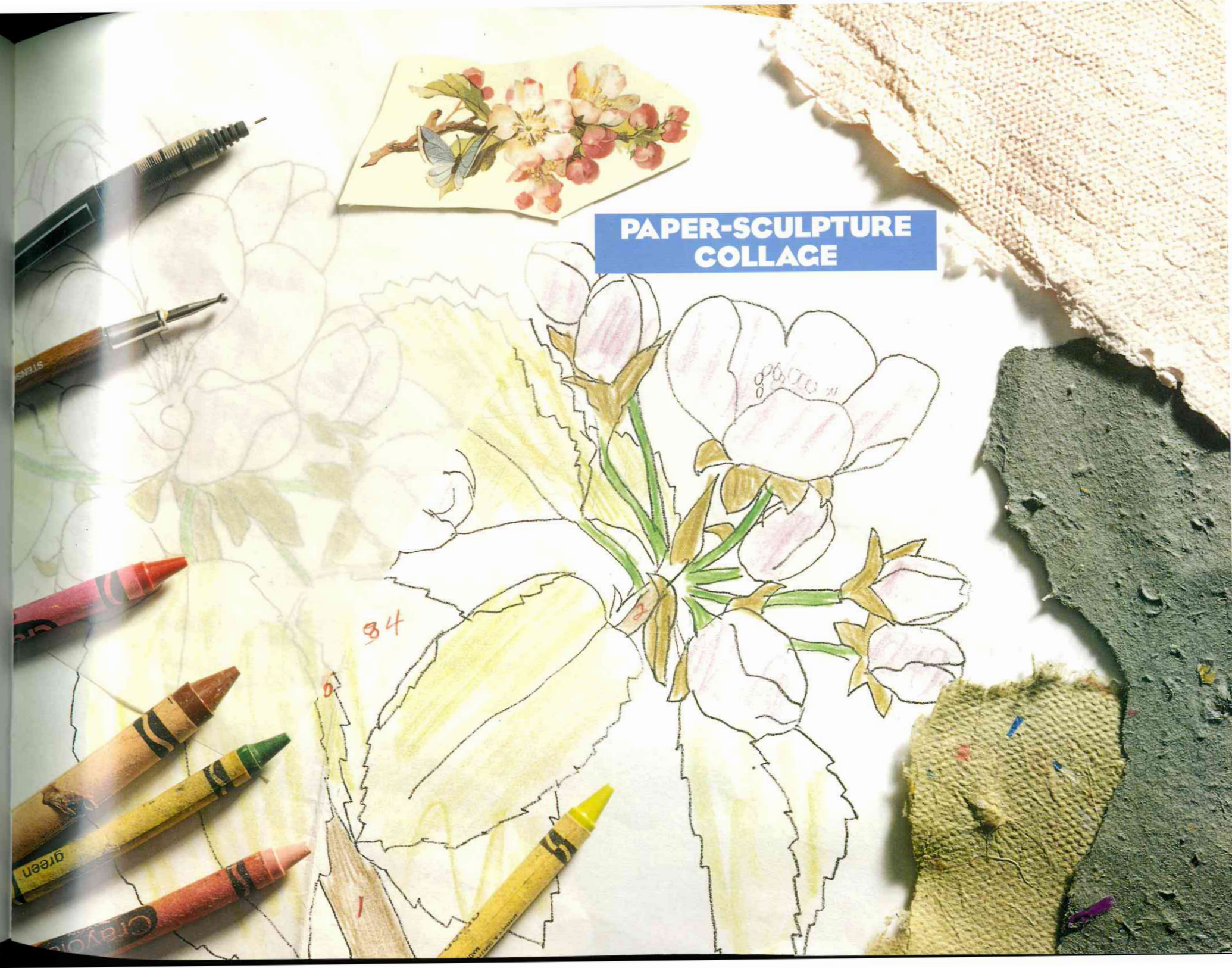
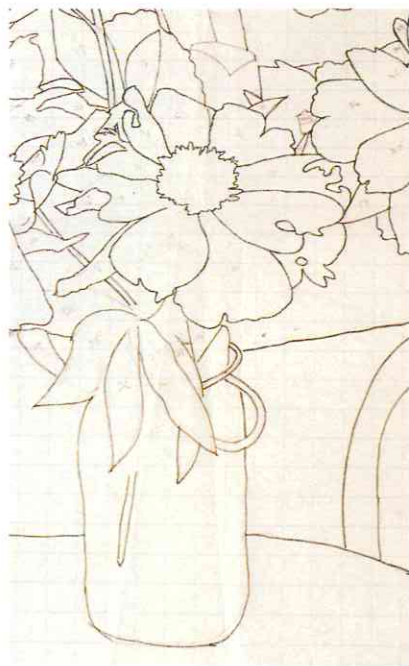


PAPER-SCULPTURE COLLAGE



I've always been fascinated by the incredible complexity of shape, color, form, and texture in flowers. In a way, flower arrangements themselves are visual collages, as are gardens.

Several years ago, I took a class from Velda Newman, author of *Velda Newman: A Painter's Approach to Quilt Design*. From Velda, I learned how to use acrylic washes and bleach on fabric to create realistic textures and colors for plant images. I made several appliquéd quilts based on her techniques and became increasingly interested in translating floral images.



A rough "cartoon"



Acrylic wash on fabric,
quilted, 24" x 32"



Handmade-paper collage

I was also lucky to work with Laura Reinstatler, another well-known quilt artist. I watched with fascination as she developed a new method for creating floral imagery in fabric. I recognized that Laura's approach was effectively a collage in fabric, and I used her method as a starting point to experiment with handmade paper.

A flower collage is wonderful, but it does have its challenges. To make a successful collage, you need to spend a lot of time studying fresh flowers and pictures of flowers. Before you begin this collage, ask yourself questions. What is it that tells me this is a gladiola? On an Iris, which petals go up and which bend down?

Another challenge I face with flowers is really "seeing" color. No blossom is simply pink or blue or orange. Petals are translucent, and the way the light passes through them is an important part of their color. If a flower is pale yellow, that color is substantially darker on the shadowy undersides of its petals or in crevices in the flower center. (For more information on color, see page 88.)

I've developed a way of working with handmade paper that gives me the widest range of color and control for flower collages. You can adapt this approach to any other picture collage.

Before you begin, you must find a picture that inspires you. Hang it up where you can look at it several times a day. In order to translate the picture into shapes I can cut out and work with, I really have to understand what is happening in the picture. What is farthest away in the picture? Where does that stem go? What is that mass of color in the background? Is that one blossom, several petals, or a group of blossoms? When I think I can see each separate part of the picture and understand its structure, I enlarge it on a photocopy machine. Using tracing paper, I trace and simplify the shapes so I have a cartoon of the original image. The photos at left show details of a picture I explored in fabric and paper.

Once you have a cartoon of the image, you must make paper. The handmade paper should be within a few shades of the desired color. For the apple blossoms, you'll need to make some paper that is white or off-white, some that is rosy pink, a few shades of green, and several shades of brown. You'll also need a sheet of paper in a neutral color for the background.



I prefer to make paper that is lighter than the desired color; it's much easier to enhance or darken a color than to lighten it. You may want to overdy existing colored papers to get more complex color (see pages 36–38). Overdyeing a multicolored paper with green provides rich material for leaves.

EQUIPMENT

Several scraps of illustration board, each at least 4" square
 Containers for rinsing brushes
 Fine-point, permanent marking pens:
 Black or brown for tracing
 Yellow or yellow-gold for flower centers
 Hot glue gun (if not using Mod-Podge or acrylic gel medium for assembly)
 Light box (see page 87)
 Hand sewing needle
 Craft paintbrushes
 Small, sharp scissors
 Stylus

MATERIALS

Freezer paper

Handmade papers:

1 sheet, at least 8" x 10", of a neutral color for background

Assorted sizes and shades of white or off-white, pink, green, and brown

Masking tape

Mod-Podge or other acrylic gel medium (if not using a hot glue gun for assembly)

Template plastic (optional)

Watercolor paints: blue, green, yellow, red, and purple

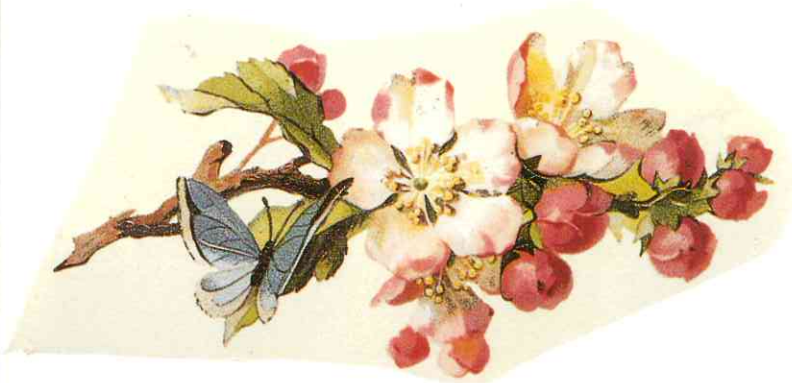
Yellow embroidery floss

"Apple Blossoms," 16" x 9".
 (Collection of Jane Dunnewold)

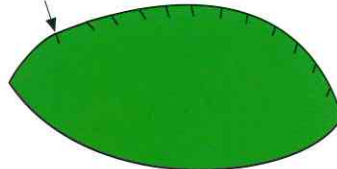


TIP

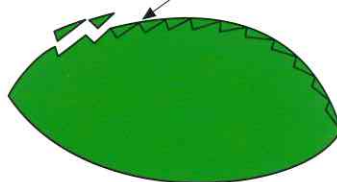
I have a tendency to draw dark veins on leaves, but in nature, the colors of the veins vary widely from the rest of the leaf. There are several ways to re-create this effect: glue-gun embossing (see page 35), diluted bleach solution (25% bleach and 75% water), or a resist. Use bleach solution sparingly, as the bleach will disintegrate the paper. To use a resist, go over the veins with collage medium before painting. When the leaf is painted, the veins will be a different color because of the resist. This technique works best with lighter value papers.



Cut.



Cut.



- 1 Assemble your equipment and materials and set up your work area. Cover your work surface with a plastic drop cloth, and fill the containers with water.
- 2 Study the picture of the apple blossoms on page 85. Do you know what goes under and what goes over? Can you see where the stem comes from and where it goes?
- 3 Make 1 photocopy of the cartoon on pages 92–93, then make templates. You can use a permanent marking pen to trace the cartoon onto template plastic, or you can make several photocopies of the cartoon and cut out the shapes.
- 4 Group the different templates, such as branches, leaves, buds, stems, and petals, in the order you will layer them. Using the stylus, trace the branches on the brown paper, then cut them out. If desired, you can darken the branches with watercolor paints after cutting.
- 5 Place the photocopy on a piece of green paper. Using the stylus, trace leaf shapes and veins.
- 6 Cut out the leaves, using a pair of small scissors. To cut sawtooth edges, make cuts in one direction, then make cuts in the other direction. (I prefer to cut out the shapes before I paint them. When you paint a cut shape, dye tends to collect around the edge, giving the shape definition.)
- 7 Cover the support boards with freezer paper, folding the edges to the back and taping in place. You'll use one board for mixing paint and painting paper and one for the collage.

8 Dip a brush in water and dampen the paper you intend to paint.

9 Squeeze a small amount of each color onto the freezer-paper covered board. This is your paint palette. Mix colors, if desired.

10 Place a leaf on the board. Brush watercolor dye across the surface of the leaf. I like to paint all the leaves at once. The cartoon gives you some guidance for painting, but feel free to use your own judgment.

For realistic leaves, you can add small amounts of red, blue, yellow, and purple. Allow the leaves to dry on the board.



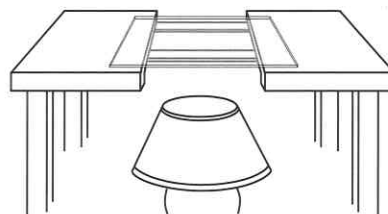
11 Referring to steps 5–10, cut and paint flower buds and stems. Since it's easy to get confused when re-assembling the flowers, I arrange the pieces for each bud in their own section on the freezer paper and keep the groups separate as I paint.



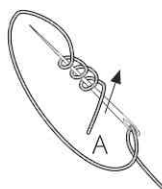
12 Position the photocopy of the cartoon and your background paper on a light box. If you don't have a light box, you can make one as shown below.

To assemble your collage, you can use Mod-Podge, a hot glue gun, or acrylic gel medium. Remember that Mod-Podge will substantially darken the collage. If you use a hot glue gun or an acrylic gel medium, you will create visible layers and dimension.

Attach the branch and stems to the background paper, then the leaves. Allow the collage to dry thoroughly before adding the next layer. Continue with the stems, flowers, and buds.



13 In my apple-blossoms collage, I used a permanent marker to draw the flower center. Since then, however, I've found that the following technique works best. Using a yellow or yellow-gold permanent marking pen, draw the center of the flower. Thread a needle with yellow embroidery floss. Stitch a French knot at the end of each line as shown.



Wrap thread around needle.



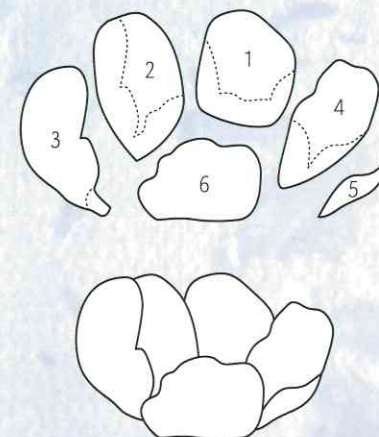
Pull wraps firmly. Hold tension with thumb.



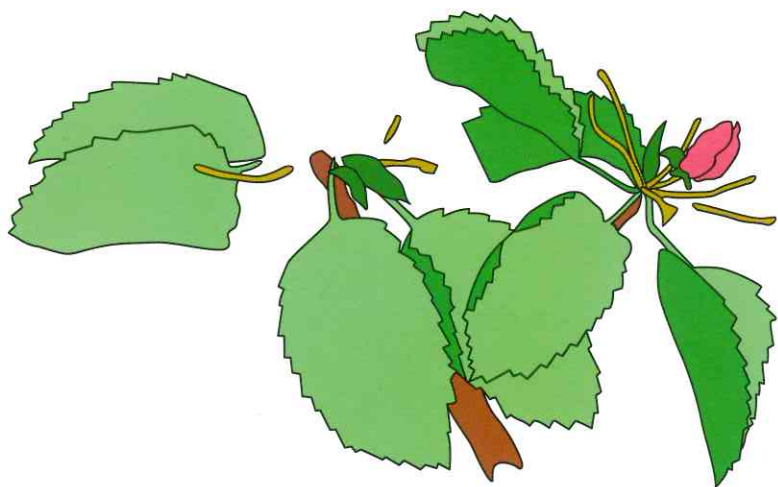
French knot

TIP

The numbers show an example of placement order for a flower. As you cut out the pieces, remember to extend by $\frac{1}{4}$ " any lines that lie under another piece, as shown.



Assembled flower



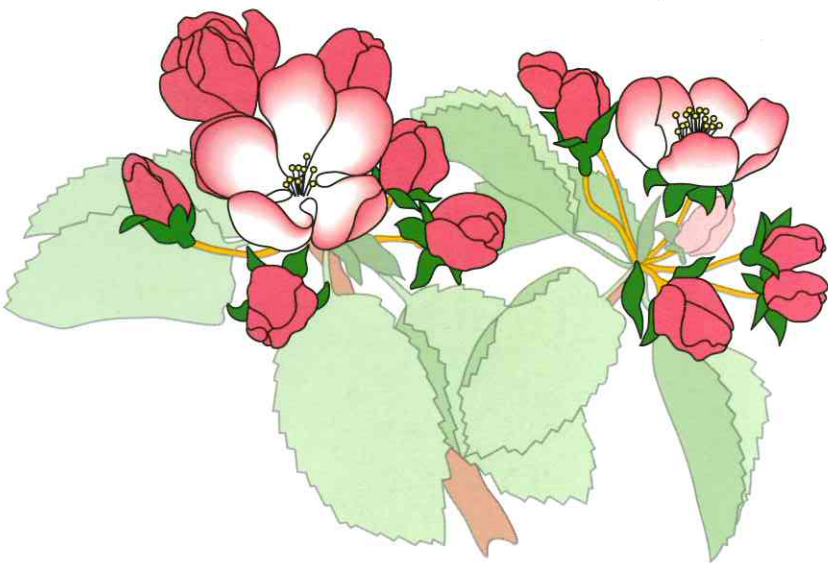
First-stage assembly

Color

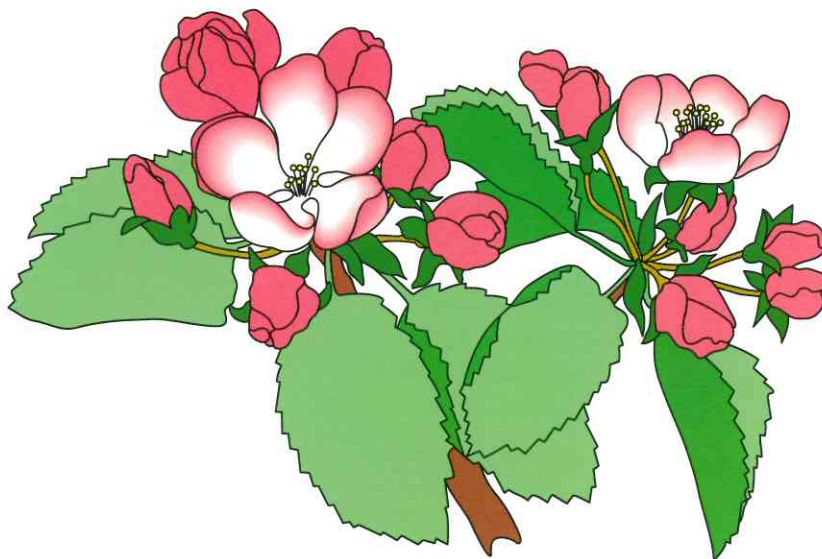
Color can fool you. An art instructor told me that every color is in every thing, and if you look at anything long enough, all those colors will emerge. It's hard to explain, but he was right. Study a flower for an hour, and you'll begin to see what he was talking about.

As the final assignment for that class, we had to paint two white eggs on a piece of white silk. We had to retain the feel of a white-on-white

painting, and yet use colors. I didn't have a clue how to do this, so I studied those eggs and that silk for an hour. Amazingly, I began to see all this color—mauves, yellows, pinks, browns, and oranges. When the paintings were displayed, you could tell who had really looked. Some of the work was technically perfect, but you could tell the artist had not really looked at the eggs and silk. It was like day and night. Practice "looking" and watch what happens!



Second-stage assembly



Completed assembly

The Art of Handmade Paper and Collage

Transforming
the Ordinary
into the
Extraordinary

Cheryl
Stevenson



FIBER
STUDIO
PRESS

