

Heal, Repair

ages 6 and up | 60 min

Knowledge and care for nature can be cultivated through shared experiences that help us discover value in the natural world and through our lived experiences. Such experiences encourage the exploration of what we believe in, of who we are, and of how we intend to live in the world.

Rosemary Ollison is a 77-year-old, self-taught artist. At 16, Ollison moved to the Midwest from an Arkansas plantation. The beginning of her practice dates back to the early '90s when, in the depths of her despair during a difficult period in her life, she asked her God: "to please do something for her even if it was just scraps." Then, she started collecting glass, leather, bracelets, beads, bones, and jewelry from thrift shops and rummage sales and repurposing the materials into sculptural and wearable works.

Ollison's work speaks to healing, the recovery process, and finding joy: "When I am creating, I am satisfied, I am free. I no longer just exist, I am alive! I do not feel worthless, hopeless, alone ... and the like. . . I can see the real me in my works." During her artist talks, she encourages students to use their intuition to "find their gift," to trust their creative imaginations by giving themselves permission to be creative, and to share this gift with others.

Inspiration:

Rosemary Ollison: *Prosperity in a Million Scraps*

<https://www.lydensculpturegarden.org/exhibitions/rosemary-ollison>



I wonder...

- Observe how the natural world is constantly giving, renewing, and repairing itself. How can we imitate nature's healing ways through our own actions?
- Can art making be a healing, empathetic action?
- How can we repair our relationship with the natural world?

Project:

Heal, Repair

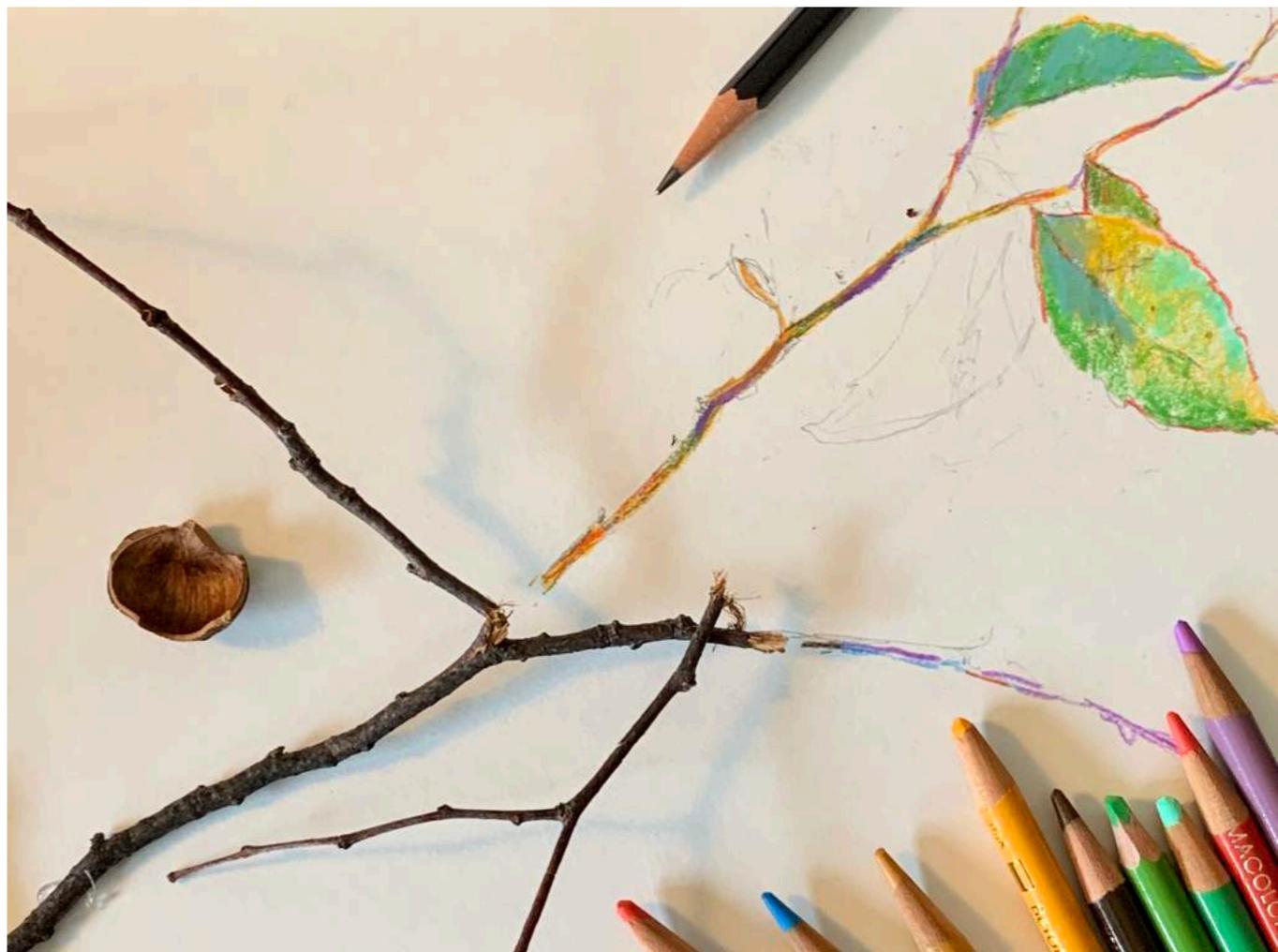
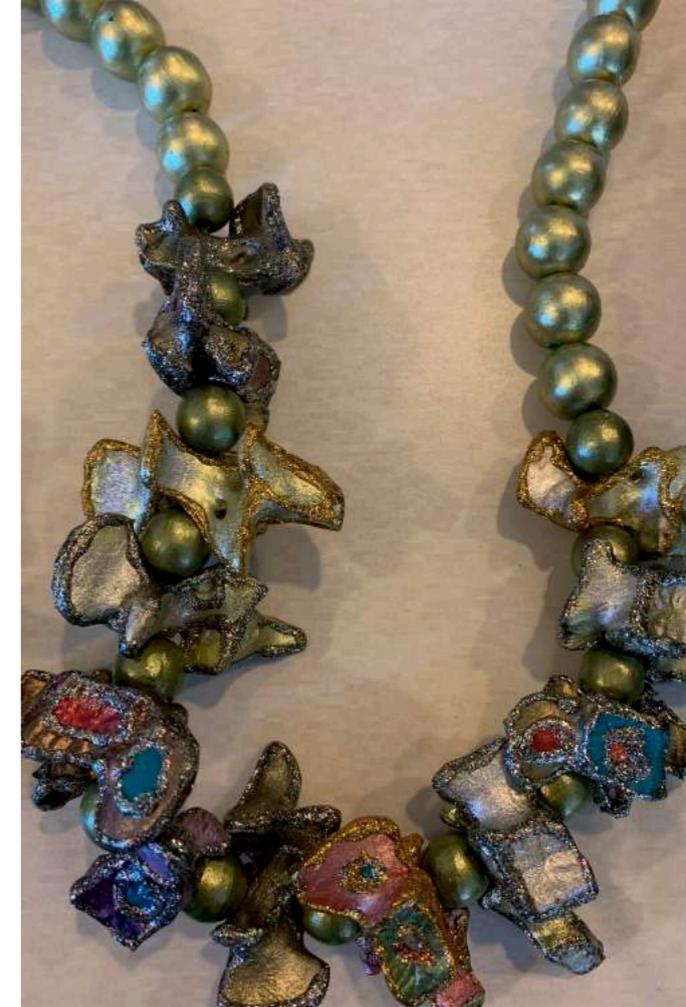
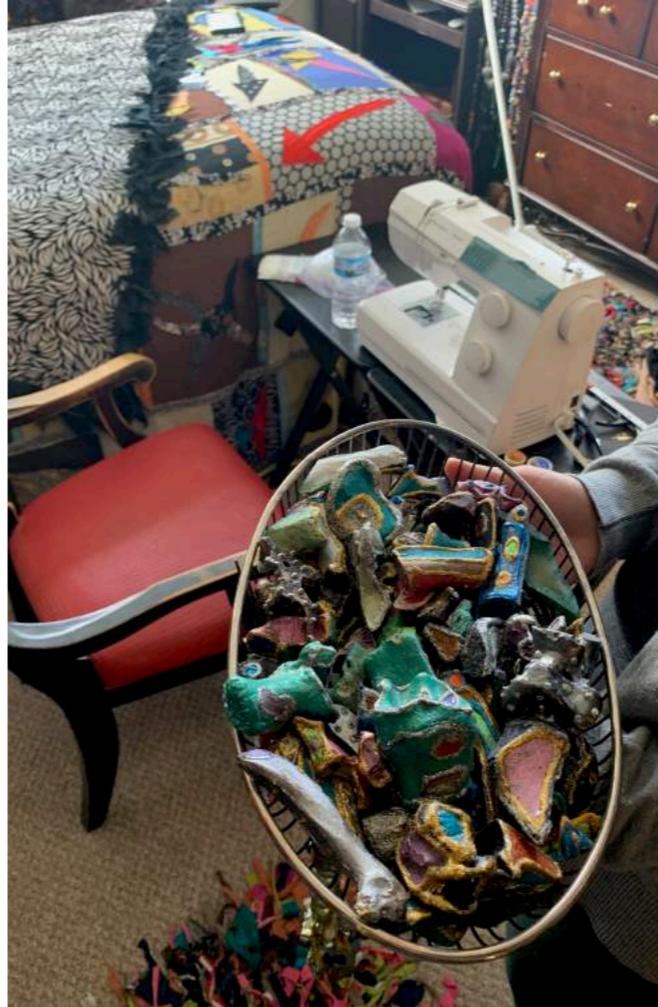
Healing and repairing extends to the materials Ollison finds in thrift shops and at rummage sales: "Everything I make comes from discarded items, as if I am rescuing the people and things abandoned in love and turning them into new beings, full of beauty and potential." Ollison even transforms old bones into wearable works of art.

Materials:

- A natural object that is broken - a cracked bird's egg, a broken stick, a torn leaf, etc...
- Materials used to repair:
 - Tape
 - Staples
 - Bandages
 - String
 - Glue
- Paper
- Drawing tools
- Art materials you may have on hand (optional)

Making:

1. Find a natural object that appears broken.
2. Repair it in your own style. You don't need to return it to its original state—repair it so we can see how you mended it. You might also transform the object into something new, like Ollison's bone necklaces. How many different ways can you discover to heal or repair an object? Or...
3. Glue your object to a piece of drawing paper. Can you use drawing as a way to heal or repair your object? For example, you might draw missing parts, or imagine how your object could continue to grow.



Taking It Further:

Heal, Repair

Kintsugi or Kintsukuroi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with lacquer dust or lacquer mixed with powdered gold, silver or platinum. As a philosophy, it treats breakage and repair as part of the history of an object, rather than something to disguise. This method has similarities to the Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi, which embraces the flawed or imperfect. The act of repair is not for the object itself, but for the viewer of the object. Why do you think the artists use gold, silver or platinum to mend the breakage?

- How can we learn from our mending process? Once you've healed or repaired your object, how has the object become something else?
- How can we honor that we are forever changed from the mending process, while continuing down a positive, strong path once we are "put back together"?
- How can we promote healing through our own actions?
- How can we promote a sense of well-being in our family, community and planet?

Sources

<https://www.portraitsocietygallery.com/rosemary-ollison>

<https://www.lyndensculpturegarden.org/calendar/rosemary-ollison-opening-reception>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kintsugi>

