

The top of the page features a dark blue, chalkboard-like background. On the left side, there is a close-up image of a paint palette with various colors of paint (purple, blue, yellow, red) and a paintbrush. The word "ARTBURST" is written in large, white, stylized, uppercase letters across the top. Below it, the word "studios" is written in a smaller, white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

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Hosting An Art-Filled Gathering

WE ARE ALL CREATIVE

When we think of art and creativity, we usually focus on paintings, sculptures, and thought-provoking pieces we see in art museums and galleries. But, art comes in many different forms, such as cooking, fashion, literature, architecture, music, poetry, and even designing comfortable spaces in your home. You were born creative, and so were your friends and family. Sometimes we just need a reminder.

PERMISSION TO PLAY

Let's move creativity out into the open and give people permission to play. After all, it's not about painting the next major masterpiece; it's about experiencing the fun of creating together. Whether, as a child, you were coloring on walls, creating "potions" in the kitchen sink, giving your dolls makeovers, playing dress-up or daydreaming up elaborate superhero schemes, you knew that flexing your creative muscles was FUN! Bring that creative joy back by hosting an art-filled gathering!

RELAX AND EMBRACE THE MESS

Most of us have hosted gatherings during holidays, celebrations, or to share a meal. We prepare for weeks to ensure every surface is gleaming and the menu is perfect. We encourage you to approach hosting an art-filled gathering in a much more relaxed way. Why? Because it's about PLAY! It's about the freedom to experiment and explore and about creating a space where being imperfect is encouraged. Hosting an art-filled gathering is an opportunity to laugh, learn, and even get a few drops of paint in our hair!



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Preparing for Your Art-Filled Gathering

1

INVITE PARTICIPATION

Whether you send out paper invitations, electronic invites or a group text, let your guests know that the goal of your gathering isn't to create a masterpiece, but rather to have fun creating together. Allow tentative participants to pull up a chair and watch until they're ready to jump in.

2

TAKE YOUR TIME

We suggest scheduling 3-4 hours for your gathering. This gives space for eating, laughing, and sharing the latest news, while still leaving enough time to create. You'll be surprised how quickly time flies! Some people may finish the project, while others may not. Have boxes or bags on hand for people to transport their unfinished projects home along with a few supplies to keep them going.

3

NARROW THE FOCUS

There are so many different ways to create. Having a clear project in mind eliminates the stress of staring at a blank page. Keep your project simple and open-ended to avoid frustration and encourage fun. We've included a resource page that may help you pick a technique or project to focus on.

4

BE PREPARED

Whether you decide to provide all the supplies, or you have guests pitch-in potluck-style, make sure you have plenty of supplies to go around. Markers, watercolor paints, and colored pencils are easy options, readily available and inexpensive. Make sure to have aprons or drop cloths on hand as needed to protect clothing and surfaces if you expect to get messy.

Preparing for Your Art-Filled Gathering

HAVE A SNACK

5

Snacks are a great ice-breaker and add to the feelings of community. Remember that the food doesn't need to be elaborate. Keep it simple. Finger foods or small bites that can be grazed on throughout the event are great options. Keep in mind that some guests may have special dietary requirements and preferences. Make sure to ask ahead of time.

SET THE STAGE

6

Set up the creative space. Make it comfortable and safe for people to play without worrying about getting paint or marks in unexpected places. Purchase a 3-4mm thick plastic drop cloth or a table covering to protect your work surfaces. Suggest guests wear comfortable clothing that would benefit from additional color. Consider hosting the party outside or set up tables in a room safe for spills and spots.

GET THE PARTY STARTED

7

Guests may be a bit nervous and unsure where to begin. Help them get started by handing them a pencil and striking your best pose. Make it funny and one you can hold for a few minutes. Their job is to create a continuous line drawing of you, their incredible live model. Give them two minutes and then compare drawings. That will get them laughing and break the ice. Celebrate every creation. Who knows? You may reignite someone's passion for creating!

ENJOY YOURSELF

8

Create along with your guests. Let them help themselves to snacks and supplies. This is a time, not just for your visitors to have fun, but for you to join in. Have a blast!

The background of the top section is a dark blue-grey surface, possibly a chalkboard, with various art supplies scattered on it. On the left, there's a palette with blobs of purple, blue, and white paint. Below it, a watercolor palette with several colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, black) is visible. A pencil and a brush are also present. The logo 'ARTBURST' is written in large, white, stylized, blocky letters at the top. Below it, the word 'studios' is written in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font, with wide letter spacing.

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Art-Filled Gathering – Resources

FREE FUN ONLINE CLASSES FOR INSPIRATION

There are incredible free and paid classes available online. Jeanne Oliver, Kara Bullock and Carla Sonheim host some of our favorites.

<https://jeanneoliver.com/view-free-courses/>

<https://karabullockart.com/free-art-tutorials/>

<https://www.carlasonheim.com/product-category/classes/free-classes/>

WARM-UP EXERCISES TO GET THE CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING

- Draw the person sitting next to you in one continuous line.
- Keeping your eyes closed, sculpt or draw your favorite animal.
- Add marks to paper with different tools (graphite pencil, colored pencils, ink, paint). What do you see in the background? Bring it to life!
- Try drawing an animal or person with your non-dominant hand.
- Start a drawing and then pass it to the person sitting next to you to finish.
- Sculpt yourself in air-dry clay. (We want pictures!)

BONUS TIPS

- Don't forget your out-of-town peeps. Set up a Zoom call so they can participate from afar.
- Let everyone create their own piece at their own pace. Some people will enjoy duplicating what you or someone else is doing. Others will go in a completely different direction. You can learn so much and be inspired by each other.
- Want a bit more direction? Hire a local artist to spend an hour or two teaching a technique to you and your guests.
- After the gathering, pack up any unused supplies so you'll have a supply kit you can add to for the next time.

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An Art-Filled Story

IN MY OWN WORDS- JENNIFER STECK

It was an incredible collage class taught by Carla Sonheim that got us started. I was so inspired by the techniques I was learning, that I decided to invite my family members over for an "art date". Everyone was asked to bring inexpensive craft paints in different colors. Someone brought shades of blue, another brought shades of red, and everyone brought cheap brushes. We made it a potluck, so there was plenty of delicious food.

I shared some of what I learned in Carla's class, and everyone jumped right in. As I was telling one of my family members how to do something, she told me, "that may be your style, but it's not mine." She was so right! It was amazing seeing the variety of creative interpretations. We've had many art-filled gatherings since then.



Last Thanksgiving, I hosted another art date, this time with air-dry clay and found objects. The kitchen island was ready for food. The dining room and living room were ready for art, and I added extra seating in the family room, so there would be room for us to eat together.

When everyone arrived, I began explaining how to create a found object sculpture with clay and never even finished. Wow! Despite the fact that most of my guests had no experience, they all jumped right in. Even some new friends I'd never met before joined us. Talk about fun and fabulous!

We stepped away for dinner, and I expected everyone to take a break. They weren't having it. We shared what we were grateful for, quickly ate our food, and were back at the art tables. New friends, camaraderie, joy, creativity, and laughter made it one of our most memorable Thanksgivings yet.

And, the best part? My sister is now featured in her first online art show as a sculptor using clay and found objects. It makes a difference. Light that fire, my friends!