

USPS ART PROJECT

Artists for the USPS

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Alyse Rosner is a Connecticut-based artist collaborator with the USPS Art Project



What was your studio situation like during quarantine?

I have been very lucky during quarantine. My studio is a walk-out basement in my home, so I have had access to it throughout the pandemic. Last winter I applied for a residency through the Clementina Arts Foundation and I was notified in March of 2020 that I was awarded a studio for 6 months in unused retail space in the Stamford Town Center mall. The lock-down delayed the residency until mid August, but I have been so fortunate to have this space ever since. This residency studio is much bigger than any studio I have ever had so I have been spreading out on the walls and floor. Currently I have four mural scale paintings underway, a layered installation of frottage scrolls on yupo and sheer fabric panels that is part of my collaborative project [Object, Surface, Texture](#), and a handful of other odds and ends.

Have the influences for your work changed throughout this year?

I don't think the influences have changed, but I have pursued my impulses more freely than I do in "normal times". I usually make large scale abstract paintings combining graphite rubbings from nature and my home, gestural brushwork, obsessive mark making and transparent color. The paintings are materials driven but also reflect my personal experience and environmental concerns. Once the reality of the pandemic and lockdown sunk in, suddenly I felt like "anything goes". It was a weird time. It still is. So I pursued ideas that in the past I might have ignored because they didn't fit with my work, exactly. I painted on 6 inch wood panels, on cedar cubes, and I had this urge to make plaster faces and face coverings. I also did a series of about 20 flower paintings-- that was the first time I have worked from observation in ages. Since 2000 I have been focused on acrylic paint but during the quarantine I kept thinking about the lush color of oil paint and decided to unpack the supplies I had put away after graduate school. Now I have a handful of small oil paintings started and I'm hoping to focus more on them in March once my residency ends.

USPS Art Project?

I have never made collaborative art but I love to receive mail-- real mail, not bills-- so when I heard that you (founder, Christina Massey) had started this project I was very excited to participate. The USPS Art Project inspired me to connect with other artists, friends and even some family members. Of course it was fun to receive a completely surprising package in the mail and I found it very challenging to respond and adapt to another person's vision and vocabulary. It was also really interesting to see how others responded to my marks. I sent drawings to my nephews in California and we went back and forth several times, and my son and my mom sent their "starts" to me. Margot Spindleman added a luminous green wash to



my black and white line drawing, then tore and reassembled our collaboration, which I expected but was still surprising to see. Seren Morey and I overlap in our obsessive approach, though her marks are 3 dimensional and mine are flat. Collaborations I did with Susan Luss and Alexi Rutsch Brock were exchanged several times with inks, washes and acrylic paint, overlapping geometry, layers of lines, ink splashes and still life. I am really grateful for

the opportunity to participate in this project and I appreciate all the organizing that must go on behind the scenes! It has been amazing to be part of this very positive community during such a sad crazy time, exhibiting collaborations in USPS Art Project shows in New York, Connecticut and Philadelphia, and following on social media where there is such an enormous range of works and so many unexpected pairings. Meanwhile, it feels really important to continue to support the United States Post Office for so many reasons-- especially in light of everything that went on during the elections with controversy surrounding mail-in ballots. Hopefully the new administration will repair and reinforce what was dismantled.

Was there a collaboration result that really surprised you?

My son, who was home from college at the time, sent me a blue surgical mask in the mail with calligraphy on it that read "ask me about my day" ... I had told him about the project but I was very surprised when I opened the envelope. It was very challenging for me to figure out how to respond, but it was a good opportunity to venture beyond my usual mark making and materials. Finally I added gold clouds inspired by Japanese screen painting around his words.



Do you have any other projects currently in the works?

Yes!

Object, Surface, Texture is an ongoing collaborative project that began as part of my residency with Clementina Arts Foundation, and will continue until COVID ends. The project is focused on frottage as a means to express an element of our collective pandemic experience. Participants are invited to create a rubbing of an object, surface or texture from their surroundings and share this impression taken during this time of isolation. Similar to the USPS Art Project, this opportunity is open to anyone who would like to participate:

1. You are invited to create a rubbing of an object, surface or texture that is in some way related to your experience in this time of COVID. Making a rubbing is most easily done by covering an object, surface or texture with smooth paper and transferring the impression by drawing with the side of a peeled crayon, graphite stick, conté crayon or other similar material.
2. The next step is to photograph your rubbing and email it along with a brief description to object.surface.texture@gmail.com and I will post the image on Instagram [@object.surface.texture](https://www.instagram.com/object.surface.texture)

Although the project is primarily virtual, there is also an evolving installation of all the rubbings I have received to date on view to the public through the end of February at the Stamford Town Center in Connecticut.



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