



# COLOR LAB

## FOR MIXED-MEDIA ARTISTS

52 EXERCISES FOR EXPLORING COLOR CONCEPTS  
THROUGH PAINT, COLLAGE, PAPER, AND MORE

DEBORAH FORMAN





*Pluff Mud and Sea Grass, oil and graphite on paper*



*Wildflowers II, oil and graphite on paper*

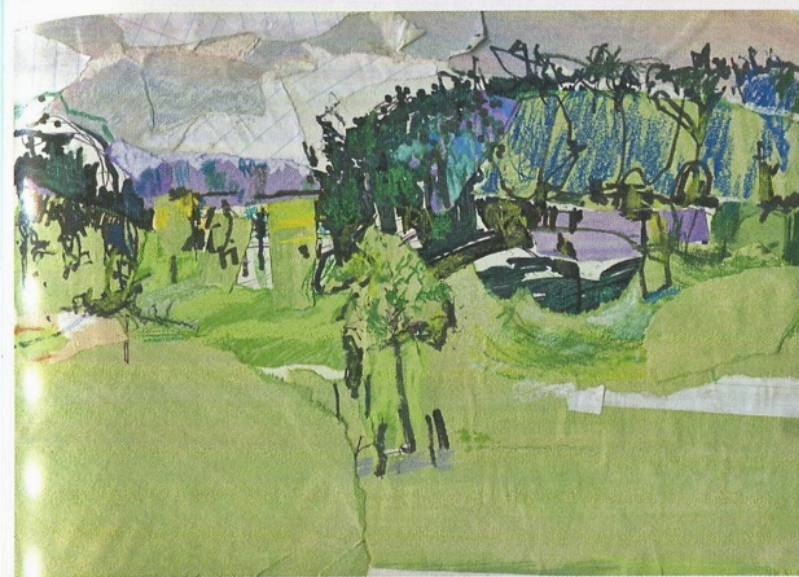
*“The grass emerges from winter in its grayish-brown brittleness to the saturated, bright green of spring almost without notice.”*

FRANK IS A LANDSCAPE PAINTER WHO LIVES IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, where observing green has a long season! Here, he describes how he approaches color in his beautiful and skillfully crafted imagery.

*It wasn't until I moved to the South, from the Northeast, that I became aware of the complexities of green. Perhaps it's the stronger light here or the vast swatches of sea grass along the coast that gradually register the seasons. In the summer, things tend to bleach out and become muted by the high sun, while autumn brings a green that gradually leans toward yellow and eventually burns out with a bang of orange. I've found that color and light don't exist separately; rather, one gives form to the other.*

*Working outside in front of the motif forces me to respond quickly to a continuously changing space. As I try to arrange the colors as shapes according to the light of the sun, the painting stands as a record of the time spent there.*





Landscape, collage, mixed media on board



Cloud II, oil on paper



Apple Trees and Moon, oil and graphite on paper

## PROJECT IDEA: LANDSCAPE COLLAGE

Create a large “lot” of swatches using construction paper—or other high chroma paper—as the base. Make different washes of acrylic paint, thinned with some water and medium, to stain the papers, and apply these with a sponge brush or a large bristle brush. You’ve now created various assortments of custom-dyed papers that you can use for collages out in the landscape. I’ve found that this allows me to react more intuitively to the motif, freeing me up from on-the-spot color mixing, and forcing me to translate color as shape. Drawing over top of the collaged paper using pastel, pencil, or charcoal also introduces the element of line and adds to your color possibilities.

*It takes a few years to become familiar with the rhythms of a place. Gradually, you get to know how the shadows fall at different times of the day and year, what the ebb and flow of the tide do to the color of water, and how the amount of moisture in the air affects the color of trees.*