



WHERE TO SWAP ATCS?  
 ONLINE COMMUNITIES ARE THE EASIEST PLACE TO START—BE IT FACEBOOK GROUPS, REDDIT'S R/ATCSFORALL, OR DEDICATED SWAP SITES LIKE ATCSFORALL.COM, HOST REGULAR THEMED SWAPS BY POST.  
 IN PERSON, LOOK FOR LOCAL CRAFT FAIRS, ART JOURNALING MEETUPS, AND ZINE FESTS WHERE TRADERS OFTEN GATHER. If THERE'S NOTHING NEARBY, ORGANIZE YOUR OWN SWAP—ALL YOU NEED IS A FEW WILLING FRIENDS AND A THEME.

ATC IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED  
 TRY A SELF-PORTRAIT SERIES: MAKE ONE CARD FOR EVERY DECADE OF YOUR LIFE, EACH IN A DIFFERENT STYLE.  
 USE OLD DICTIONARY PAGES AS BACKGROUNDS AND ILLUSTRATE THE WORD DEFINED BENEATH YOUR PAINTING. ADD STICKERS OR MAKE A COLLAGE OF MAGAZINE PHOTOS TO SIGNAL A CURRENT EVENT.  
 DESIGN A SEASON SWAP SET—FOUR CARDS REPRESENTING SPRING, SUMMER, AUTUMN, AND WINTER—TO TRADE AS A GROUP.  
 TRY FOUND OBJECT MONOPRINTING: INK UP LEAVES, LACE, OR BUBBLE WRAP AND PRESS THEM ONTO CARD BLANKS FOR INSTANT TEXTURE.  
 THERE ARE NO RULES TO BREAK, SO ANYTHING GOES!

## GET TO KNOW THE WORLD OF ARTIST TRADING CARDS



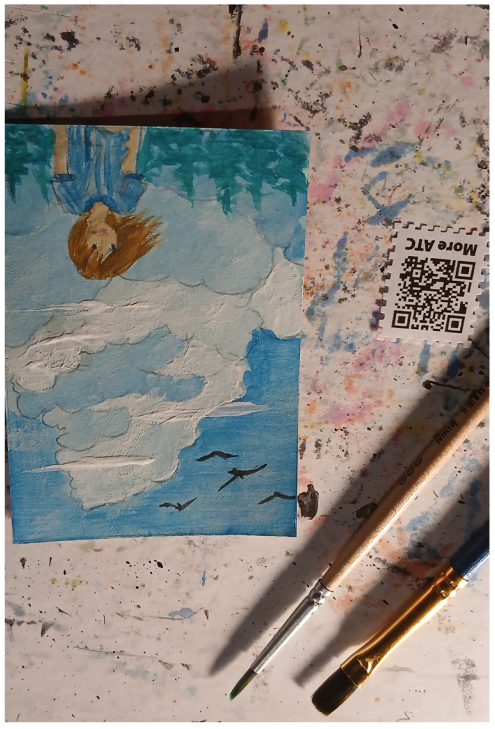
GODAI, MARCH 2026

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## WHAT ARE ARTIST TRADING CARDS?

ARTIST TRADING CARDS (ATCS) ARE MINIATURE WORKS OF ART, EXACTLY 2.5 × 3.5 INCHES—THE SAME SIZE AS A STANDARD PLAYING CARD. EACH ONE IS A TINY WORK OF ART: PAINTED, COLLAGED, STAMPED, OR EVEN SEWN INTO A UNIQUE PIECE.

THE GOLDEN RULE OF ATCS IS THAT THEY ARE NEVER SOLD AND CAN ONLY BE TRADED OR GIVEN FREELY BETWEEN ARTISTS. THIS KEEPS THE FOCUS ON CREATIVE CONNECTION RATHER THAN MONEY, BUILDING COMMUNITY, AND RESTORING THE SHARING CULTURE.

ANYONE CAN MAKE ONE, FROM SEASONED GALLERY ARTISTS TO COMPLETE BEGINNERS PICKING UP A GLUE STICK FOR THE FIRST TIME. ALSO GREAT FOR KIDS!



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ATC

ATCS WERE BORN IN 1997 IN ZÜRICH, SWITZERLAND, WHEN ARTIST M. VANCI STIRNEMANN CREATED 1200 SMALL CARDS AND EXHIBITED THEM. HE WAS TRADING BUT NEVER SELLING.

THE CONCEPT SPREAD RAPIDLY, CROSSING THE ATLANTIC BY THE EARLY 2000S AND EXPLODING THROUGH ONLINE ARTIST COMMUNITIES.

A COUSIN FORMAT, ACEOS (ART CARDS, EDITIONS, AND ORIGINALS), EMERGED AROUND THE SAME TIME. THEY ARE IDENTICAL IN SIZE BUT CAN BE SOLD, MAKING THEM POPULAR ON COMMERCIAL PLATFORMS LIKE ETSY.

TODAY, MILLIONS OF ATCS ARE CREATED WORLD-WIDE, TRADED AT ART FAIRS, CRAFT MEETUPS, AND THROUGH ORGANIZED POSTAL SWAPS. THE FORMAT HAS ENDURED BECAUSE ITS HEART IS COMMUNITY, NOT PRODUCT OR SALES.

WATERCOLOR IS ONE OF THE MOST BELOVED ATC MEDIUMS. THE SMALL SIZE MEANS A SINGLE PAINTING ONLY TAKES MINUTES, AND TRANSLUCENT, LAYERED ART IS ESPECIALLY BEAUTIFUL AT THIS SCALE.

MIXED MEDIA COLLAGE IS EQUALLY POPULAR: TORN BOOK PAGES, VINTAGE STAMPS, AND WASHI TAPE LAYERED TOGETHER CREATE RICH, TEXTURED SURFACES. IT'S LIKE SCRAPBOOKING OR MAKING A JUNK JOURNAL, BUT IN MINIATURE.

INKING TECHNIQUES LET ARTISTS MAKE COMIC-LIKE, INTRICATE, DETAILED IMAGES, WHILE MARKERS MAKE THEM ALIVE WITH COLORS.

ARTISTS PRINT OR STAMP DESIGNS ONTO CARDS AND ADD HAND-PAINTED EMBELLISHMENTS ON TOP.