



ONLINE COMMUNITIES ARE THE EASIEST PLACE TO START—BE IT FACEBOOK GROUPS, REDDIT'S R/ATCFORALL, OR DEDICATED SWAP SITES LIKE ATCFORALL.COM, HOST REGULAR THEMED SWAPS BY POST.

WHERE TO SWAP ATCS?

ZINES ARE UNOFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS DEVOTED TO ISSUES YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT. THEY CAN BE ABOUT MUSIC, HOBBIES, PERSONAL OR SOCIAL MATTERS, ABOUT THINGS NO ONE WANTS TO TALK ABOUT AND THAT SHOULD BE SPOKEN ABOUT OUT LOUD. THEY CAN TAKE THE FORM OF COMICS, PHOTOGRAPHS, TEXTS, POETRY...

READ ZINES, MAKE ZINES, SUPPORT INDEPENDENT, FREE VOICES.

GET MORE FREE ZINES FROM
WWW.GNIAZDOSWIATOW.NET

SEE AN ATC GALLERY AT
WWW.GNIAZDOSWIATOW.NET



TRY FOUND OBJECT MONOPRINTING: INK UP LEAVES, LACE, OR BUBBLE WRAP AND PRESS THEM ONTO CARD BLANKS FOR INSTANT TEXTURE.

DESIGN A SEASON SWAP SET—FOUR CARDS REPRESENTING SPRING, SUMMER, AUTUMN, AND WINTER—TO TRADE AS A GROUP.

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.

TRY A SELF-PORTRAIT SERIES: MAKE ONE CARD FOR EVERY DECADE OF YOUR LIFE, EACH IN A DIFFERENT STYLE.

ATC IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

GET TO KNOW THE WORLD OF ARTIST TRADING CARDS



GODAI, MARCH 2026



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!



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

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

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.

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.

ATCS MAKING TECHNIQUES

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.